

# TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

## FREEDOM IN CHRIST

THE CALL TO BE FREE

*Samuel Rayan*

FREEDOM, AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF HINDUISM

*T. K. John*

THE JESUS MOVEMENT

*X. Irudayaraj*

WHAT OUR FRIENDS THINK

*Mathew Kalathil*

FREEDOM IS LIFE

*M. Bridget*

THE PILGRIMAGE OF FREEDOM

*Abraham Koothottil*

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# JEEVADHARA

— A Journal of Christian Interpretation —

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# The Living Christ

**FREEDOM IN CHRIST**

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# Editorial

The fourth gospel tells the story of a woman caught in adultery and brought to Jesus. The story shows how the Law kills and how Jesus liberates and saves. The Pharisees made the woman stand in full view of everybody and said: "Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning." Laws of religion and religions of law kill: they stone people to death; they burn the body and crush the spirit and destroy the life of men and women; whom and how many hundreds or thousands they have already liquidated is known only to the prison walls, the dark dungeons, the secret files and the torture chambers of Bastilles, Inquisitions, monasteries, parliaments, and palaces both sacred and secular.

A Kerala poet tells the story of a fourteen-year-old Brahmin girl who was found pregnant while still unwed. Her enraged and disappointed father beat her till his own arms went limp, and then, leaving her in a heap on the floor, retired into the depths of silent grief. The girl made no answer. She sat, sobbing and silent, and remembered her tutor, a handsome and vivacious conversationalist; and remembered his first touch, and the thrill of it, and the love and sweetness he brought to her life, and his distress on discovering her new condition, and his pressing invitation to her to come away and be his wife and the mother of his children; she recalled with regret the agonizing moment of decision when she declined the invitation. How could she trust him, and how could she leave father and mother? She was their only child, the light of their life. She stayed, seeking to hide what was no longer hidden. The parents could no longer keep her. They had to submit to the rules, customs, traditions and demands of religion and of society; they had no choice but to cast the girl out of the home and bar and bolt the entrance from within. While they languished in sorrow, their child walked on with heavy steps and a heavier heart, going nowhere because she had nowhere to go. She would not destroy herself, she would not hurt the life that nestled within her. Once she got home,

she hoped, her parents would relent. It was a vain hope, for though they saw her, their hearts and hands were not free to take her in. She could hear her mother weep, but the door remained shut. One day she fainted on the road, and awoke in a hospital. On leaving the hospital, she had, besides the burden of her life, her sorrow and her shame, the additional one of a baby to carry. This last she laid one night before the locked door of her father's house and disappeared. The baby's cry brought its grand-parents to the door; they hesitated, opened the door, hesitated, took up the baby, looked for its mother, called out for her, but got no answer except the silence of the night and that of the dark waters of the river near by.

The poet blames no one, condemns no one. He suffers with everyone involved, and we suffer too. Yet as we reflect, a distinct indignation kindles in our minds against the laws and traditions which made it necessary and right and proper to throw a young person alone and pregnant on the streets. We wish, and wish very much, that Jesus had been there. He would have liberated her. He would have said: "The Sabbath is for man; all your laws and religions must yield to this young woman's need for sympathy, comfort and aid; all the rules, customs and holinesses which cannot accept her in love and serve her shall be broken and set aside."

Perhaps Jesus was there. For finally liberation did come to the parents. It came to them through suffering and loss; and who can tell these were not part of His redeeming Passion, teeming with liberating power? When the parents befriended the baby they befriended their unfortunate daughter too, and were no longer slaves of religion but God's children. For that was a moment of truth and freedom; the cross they bore had made them human.

Instead of being increasingly liberated, we are being bound again and again in various ways; and a thousand subtle chains are being daily forged for our spirit by state and society, by religions and churches, by conventions, fashions and traditions, by fear, by poverty of imagination and by selfishness. The economic system is designed to enslave the masses more and more, and education is in large measure a process of condition-



ing people for easier manipulation by the clever. The press and the ads cajole men into new forms of bondage and into caressing their fetters, while in the political field power becomes more and more impersonal, faceless, tyrannical. In a world of this sort the disciples of Jesus everywhere have to become the voice and the standard of total human freedom lifted high among the world's peoples. For Jesus came to proclaim the good news to the poor and liberty to captives, to give sight to the blind and set the downtrodden free: It is the vocation of his church to be a programme of liberty and a house of freedom. And if she remembers that in the past she has not responded to her vocation, but has often been on the side of oppressive forces and enslaving agencies and programmes, she will now repent and pray for the grace of a deep conversion.

But the gospel's hardest struggle will be with men's fear of freedom. The Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* is perhaps right: to freedom with its responsibilities and risks, men prefer the security of unfreedom and a protected and permanent spiritual boyhood. They want to be spared the agony of continual choice and personal decision, spared the burden of having charge of their own consciences before God. It is so much easier to feed on canned answers to life's questions and on ready-made moralities and pieties. There are timid men of this kind and there are others ready to exploit their timidity, to make men believe that all they need is bread, that it is in their temporal and eternal interest to barter freedom for it. To some, then, religion is more of an insurance policy for the life after death than a divine challenge to live dangerously as Jesus did.

It is not easy today to speak about freedom in religion. Not that the word may be misunderstood, but that it may not be understood at all. It may be like speaking of the sea to little boys in Madhyapradesh or Bihar; they will hardly succeed in forming a mental picture of what you are talking about. And yet when one comes to think of it, freedom should have been that of the ideas spontaneously and universally associated with religion; it should have been one of the realities made familiar to men and brought home to the experience of people by religion, and surely by the christian faith at any rate. At some point in the history of freedom and of religion, the two seem to have

been torn apart to the hurt of both and the greater hurt of men. It has been observed that people accustomed to long authoritarian tradition in religion, like the catholic ecclesiastical one are liable to succumb more readily than others, to totalitarian ideologies. They have apparently been spiritually prepared through a process of unquestioning conformism, and tamed by irresponsible obedience. But the process is now beginning to boomerang. Denunciation of totalitarian and bolshevik unfreedom is giving rise to deepening uneasiness as it comes to be realized that much in the catholic "system" is hard to distinguish from systems of total control of men. How could a profound shock be avoided on the discovery that the seminary, for instance, or the convent, or the sphere of the liturgy bore many an authentic lineament of the very methods we were being asked to combat? The call to combat was genuine, the gospel cannot but stand for freedom; but the scope of the combat has proved to be much larger and the field of battle much nearer home than the summoners had suspected or perhaps wanted.

Therefore the Spirit of Jesus and the freedom he brought is newly at work within the structures of the church, and among the disciples of Jesus, and in the human community at large in the most unexpected places. It is a matter for joy to see the numberless points of growth that are for one of the basic values for which Jesus stood and paid a price. The process of the liberation of man is expanding and accelerating in all spheres of life within the church and without, in the very concept of religion and church, of authority and teaching, and of the central values of existence, christian and human.

Some of these movements of the Spirit and others of the quest for freedom are briefly indicated in this issue of Jeevadhara with a view to helping speed up the growth of freedom in the churches in India. In the first article, *The Call to Be Free*, Samuel Rayan seeks to reflect the mind of Jesus as interpreted by Paul. The presentation is framed within the quest for freedom that is already part of life of the Indian churches. T. K. John in *Freedom, an Essential Feature of Hinduism*, shows that this quest is not something new in the history of India's spiritual striving. The implication of his study seems to be that the too rigid and legalistic, and the too well organized and unfree

character of the churches is perhaps a major factor in keeping the christian movement unintelligible and alien to the spirit of the land. The article is an invitation to further research and reflection, and possibly to radical rethinking of church life in India. In *The Jesus Movement*, Irudayaraj, gives an account of a significant modern quest for Jesus and for spiritual life, in freedom, outside the straight-jackets, the superstitious narrowness and the weary inertia of much that goes on in the name of religion and of the service of salvation. The discovery of freedom in Jesus and of a way of being christian without religion's legalistic trammels are the theological significance of the Jesus Movement.

This modern quest is still 'religious.' But Mathew Kalathil, in his article, "*What our Friends Think*", presents a secular quest for freedom in our times. Many more illustrations could, surely, be given. But his question seems to be: if where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, may we not say that where freedom is found or sought, the Spirit of the Lord surely is? The story of the quest for freedom told in *Freedom is Life* by M. Bridget is different from the two previous ones in that it is now not in social endeavour but in an interior struggle. In the soul of Zorba and of his boss and in the interaction between these two characters there goes on a complicated struggle between interlocked forces of freedom and unfreedom. The story may illuminate not only personal experiences but the travail of society and church as well. Finally Abraham Koothottil traces the story of *Freedom's Pilgrimage* in order to help us understand the nature of the aspirations stirring the church so deeply in these days. Through the concluding sections of this article, the present issue of Jeevadhara opens up one of the greatest and finest gifts of the Spirit of Jesus to his church and to the world today, namely the clarity of heart and the courage to want to be free.

Vidya Jyoti  
Delhi

Samuel Rayan



# The Call to Be Free

## The quest for freedom

Freedom is one of the central concerns of the New Testament. It is also one of the many things on which the churches in India are beginning to think. They are jealously watchful over their traditional freedoms in civil society: to practise and preach their faith, to accept converts, to run educational institutions of their choice and receive aid from abroad. This brings them occasionally into conflict with local authorities. But there is also a struggle for freedom within the churches themselves. Among young people, lay or not, it takes various forms: outspoken criticism, silent neglect of the church and religion, earnest inquiry as to what the church of Jesus and his religion is all about, and open admiration of the character of Jesus, which was frank and forward, straight, unhampered, unconventional and original<sup>1</sup>.

More formally, the concern is reflected in the documents of the national seminar on 'The Church in India Today', 1969. Its concluding Declaration said: "inspired by the temper of our times, our people seek greater human development in freedom, justice and equality... It is only in genuine freedom with responsibility that the person can mature and grow... The catholic press must champion authentic human values and bear a faithful witness to the Church which is to be a leaven of freedom in human society; for this the press should be able to exercise its freedom with judgement and responsibility and no crippling restrictions." The point about freedom is also raised in many seminar resolutions: "the dynamic nature of the liturgy should be restored by giving freedom for experimentation"; "reflection on our religious heritage as found in the Indian scriptures should be

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1. In Kerala, for instance, there are two publications, *Vaidikamitram* and *Dynamic*, which for some years now have been crusading for and asserting (sometimes well, sometimes ill) a measure of freedom of speech and thought for clergy and laity.



encouraged in a spirit of freedom"; "emphasis should be placed on the development of Indian christian art... allowing freedom and originality to the artist to draw from sources far and wide"; findings of research should be published with the utmost freedom of expression allowed to competent scholars"; "the catholic press in India should be given that legitimate freedom that is necessary... the existing system of censorship of catholic papers or bringing external pressures seeking to control the publication of news and views should be given up"; "a fundamental re-orientation of our ideas and attitudes... the positive values so emphasized in contemporary society such as freedom, sincerity, respect... must animate our ecclesial community"<sup>2</sup>.

It is significant, that, whatever the matter in hand, the question of freedom is not forgotten; speak of church renewal, of the catholic press, of art, of prayer, liturgy, research, and the thought of freedom must always keep coming back. Is this due to an awareness of the centrality of freedom in christian life and the christian view of things? or to a longing for more actual freedom in the churches in India and a deeper realization of it in the lives of men and women? It is interesting to note the timid manner in which freedom is spoken of, as something to be 'given' and 'allowed'. The resolutions leave the impression that they are dealing with some strange and dangerous reality. But the nature of the quest and its direction are unmistakable.

### **A new explosion of freedom**

The search within the church is only part of larger struggle in which mankind as a whole is involved. It is perhaps a commonplace to say that our age is characterized by an explosion of freedom. "The word and the thing have wrought wonders in the modern world; they have also wrought havoc"<sup>3</sup>. The reference here is not only to the termination of colonial rule and the attainment of national independence in many parts of the world; or to the struggle going on against socio-cultural and economic dominance. Nor is the reference merely to the revolt of youth, or the liberation of women, or the lifting of taboos, or the

2. *Church in India Today*, New Delhi, 1969, pp. 239, 252, 262-264, 269.

3. Murray J.C., in Abbot, *Documents of Vatican II*, p. 674.

rejection of conventions in favour of the authentically personal. We are thinking in particular of the vast dimensions human freedom has newly acquired through scientific and technological advance. Atomic power and the knowledge of genetics has given man a radical freedom concerning himself and his world, and the future and destiny of both. From now on, the survival of the human race and the continuance of its history are not inevitable processes beyond the control of man. They depend on man's free decision. We already have the power to destroy the world in a total conflagration. If we do not actually do it, it is because we are freely choosing survival and choosing it day after day. To man, the world and the future are no longer merely imposed realities, but elected ones. Man is also in a position to decide, through biological engineering, what sort of a human he would indeed be. He has become master of his own evolution, at the level not only of culture but of his physical construction, with all its ethical and spiritual consequences. Today he has the freedom to enhance his freedom, and to engineer and manipulate it, or to end it.

This, then, is an hour of ambiguity and of challenge. It is as well a moment in which men make much of the very values of personal dignity and freedom which are radically placed at the mercy of technology. They pursue them with such eagerness as to feel at times that freedom is incompatible with the idea or the acknowledgement of a Lord God<sup>4</sup>. This is the point at which the churches and religions could, and should, enter, with a deeper reflection on the significance of the modern possibilities of freedom and of the threats that overshadow it. Aware of the situation, and determined to use the opportunities it offers, the second Vatican Council came out with a clear declaration on universal religious freedom. With fine insight it based this freedom on the nature and dignity of the human person, thus securing it for all men for all time. This was a new step, and quite an event in the catholic church though not in modern secular history, for it was a belated acknowledgement by the official church of a principle which had long been recognized in constitutional law by most modern states<sup>5</sup>. For centuries the tradition of the church

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4. *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), Nos. 17, 20, 36.

5. Murray J. C., in Abbot, p. 673.

had been to deny such freedom<sup>6</sup>, or claim it only in places where the church itself was a numerical minority. Where it was in the majority it failed to see the point in accepting or respecting any freedom of the kind! Brought up in this tradition and in the tradition of abstract thinking ('error has no rights'), many council fathers had difficulty with the text of the Declaration, which thus became the most controverted document of the Council<sup>7</sup>. But the significant thing is that it came through. And a particularly significant fact is that it came through with a clear, penitent confession of the Church's grave failings in the past in respect to this essential freedom. "In the life of the people of God as it has made its pilgrim way through the vicissitudes of human history, there have at times appeared ways of acting which were less in accord with the spirit of the gospel and even opposed to it."<sup>8</sup>

This humble avowal is, hopefully, a definitive conversion of all of us, and a final renouncement and repudiation of all measures and means, all institutions and procedures of unfreedom and coercion and total control of men's minds and lives. For the church is renewing within itself the memory of "the respect which Christ showed towards the freedom with which man is to fulfil his duty of belief in the word of God." Christ bore witness to the truth, but "refused to impose the truth by force on those who spoke against it"<sup>9</sup>. Elsewhere the Council recognises for all the faithful freedom of inquiry, of thought and of expression<sup>10</sup>. Priests are directed to "honour that just freedom which is due to everyone"; and 'sacred pastors' are asked to "allow" (!) the layman freedom and room for action<sup>11</sup>. In dropping book-rules (the index of forbidden books), and dress-rules for some categories of christians, and interminable worship-rules, fixed and frozen for all peoples and all occasions, and in many other things, some

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6. See the Syllabus of Errors of 1864, published just a century before Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Freedom, 1965.

7. cf. Murray J.C., in Abbot p. 673.

8. *Dignitatis Humanae* (DH), Religious Freedom, no. 12.

9. DH nos. 9b, 11f.

10. GS 59b, 62f; *Lumen Gentium* (on the Church) 37.

11. LG 37; PO (on Priests) n 8. 9c.

real beginning has been made in the direction of actual freedom in the church. A great deal more is sure to follow.

### **Freedom's deeper reaches**

But to realize these perspectives and push these orientations further forward, efforts like those of the seminar on *The Church in India Today* and perhaps also a measure of contestation from publications and individuals with the courage of gospel convictions, may be required. But there is danger in all these movements of an insufficient and defective understanding of christian freedom. There is the danger of concentrating attention exclusively or mainly on the social and political demensions of the freedom of the gospel, and of missing its deeper reaches in the very heart of the individual person and the centre of the Eucharistic community. For there is a freedom which is more than the ability to go where you want and say what you think. There is a greater freedom than the power to choose or think up and stand for the government, the education, and the shirt that is to your taste. There is the freedom to love with one's whole heart, and to give for this love everything including one's life, and the kind of freedom, massive, expansive and towering, that was revealed in Jesus. This is how the Bible describes it:

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. We were still helpless when at the appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man, though of course for someone really worthy a man might be prepared to die. But what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us when we were still sinners. God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for the benefit of us all. We may then be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give; that neither death nor life nor any created thing can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord. God is love. His love for us was revealed when he sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him. This is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away"<sup>12</sup>.

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12. Jn 3. 16; Rom 5. 5-8; 8. 32, 38-39; I Jn 4. 8-10.



But the most telling, touching disclosure of the freedom of God's self-giving love is Jesus on the cross of Calvary.

He was asked to descend from the cross and leave the place where the lives of all of us come to final and total breakdown, and sink in fathomless frustration and sorrow. He was asked to leave us alone there and seek shelter in men's acknowledgement of him and their good will. He refused. He was man enough, free enough, to stay with us at the most crucial juncture of our existence; at the hour of total loss when our lives were being emptied. He was free to stay with us and fill us with his own life.

He said: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd is willing to die for his sheep. I am come in order that they may have life and have it in all its fullness. I am willing to give up my life. I give it up of my own free will"<sup>13</sup>.

In Jesus crucified, there stands revealed to us the finest freedom there is — that of God, and of love. It is there for our taking, and it includes a radical programme for a radical liberation of men. Jesus' surrendered Body is there for us to lodge in; and his outpoured life with all the power and freedom of its love is seeking to flow through us and engage us in its course. In the measure in which we are inserted into Jesus at the point of his sacrificial love and of our faith-response, we are freed from the slavery of sin and all the decay it entails, and from our crabbed self-centredness. We are liberated into the unfettered life of Christ's own Spirit.

That is why to a person like Paul, the coming of the christian faith meant man's release into freedom. His experience of Christ was an experience of total liberation from all internal fear and frustration, from all external law and religion. For him commitment to the gospel of Jesus was also essentially commitment to the glad tidings of liberty. Therefore he could write with enthusiasm:

"By the death of Christ we are set free. By the free gift of God's grace men are put right with God through Jesus who

13. Jn 10. 10-11, 17-18.

sets them free. God will give complete freedom to those who are His. The Spirit is the guarantee that God will do this. For where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. The law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death. The Spirit is life, and if the Spirit lives in you, then he who raised Jesus from death, will give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of the Spirit in you. The Spirit does not make you a slave or cause you to be afraid. He makes you God's sons. All creation in fact waits with eager longing for God to reveal His sons. Creation itself will one day be set free from its slavery to decay, and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. All creation groans with pain like the pains of childbirth. And we also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his sons and set our whole being free"<sup>14</sup>. Therefore,

"Freedom is what we have. Christ has set us free. When he freed us he meant us to remain free. Stand then as free men; stand firm, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. For you were called to be free!"<sup>15</sup>

### **Beyond all law**

The "yoke" here stands for circumcision and for the entire style of life that went with it: the whole complex of commandments, food laws, ritual observances, washings, rules of conduct, legal prescriptions and traditional sanctions which made up the socio-religious life of the Jew. There was controversy in the early church as to whether non-Jews who believed in Jesus were to be bound by the Law under which Jesus himself lived and within the pale of which he had formed his community of disciples. Paul became the voice of the Spirit speaking to the churches at this hour of decision. He posed the question of the precise purpose and function of the whole of the Old Testament Law face to face with the reality of Jesus crucified and raised. He took his stand on the basic christian affirmation of God's saving work in Jesus and of the sufficiency of that work for the world's salvation. He was clear in his mind that the law had no essential contribution to make to the liberation and the life that God in

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14. Eph 1. 7, 14; Rom 3. 24; 2C 3. 17; Rom 8. 2, 14-17, 18-25.

15. Gal 5. 1, 13.

Christ was making available to man. The Law therefore could be by-passed. At any rate no reliance was to be placed on the Law and its observance. It is God in Christ that saves us, and not we ourselves. It is his grace that makes us whole, and not our own work. The Law cannot heal; it cannot therefore be kept in its entirety. It can only make us realize the brokenness and confusion of our existence, and the frustration and futility of wanting to carry ourselves on our own shoulders<sup>16</sup>. The most the Law could do was to act as a tutor controlling and educating man till the day of his emancipation, of his adulthood in the faith of Christ, and his standing as a son in Jesus our Lord<sup>17</sup>. Christ frees man not only from the clutches of death and sin but from the tangles of the Law as well.

With a bold hand Paul swept the Law aside in order to uphold every man's freedom to go directly to Christ without passing through any intermediary. If the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ, and these suffice. Paul is particularly anxious that all of us should have the experience in our hearts of this emancipation from all law; of the liberation which Jesus has accomplished, and of the freedom of the Spirit who makes us God's sons. Paul never tires of repeating:

"No man is put right in God's sight because he does what the Law requires. But now God's way of putting man right with himself has been revealed, and it has nothing to do with law. A man is put right with God only through faith, and not by doing what the Law commands. If the world is to be inherited only by those who submit to the Law, then faith is pointless, and promise is worth nothing. You do not live under the Law but under God's grace. Now we are free from the Law. No longer do we serve in the old way of a written Law, but in the new way of the Spirit. The law of the Spirit has set me free from the law of sin and death. So then we know that a man is put

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16. cf. Tagore, *Gitanjali* no. 9.

17. Rom 3. 1-20; 4. 13-17; 7. 7-25; Gal 3. 10-22.

right with God only through faith. Were it through the Law, there would be no point in the death of Christ."<sup>8</sup>

We have here in Paul a thoroughgoing repudiation of the law, and of all attempts at all times to take one's stand on the false ground of self-righteousness. Paul makes no distinction between ritual rules and moral laws, between primary duties and secondary ones. When he broke with the law he broke with it as a unit. He is in fact raising the radical question whether man's relationship to God can be stated in terms of law at all. His own answer is "No". It can be interpreted only in terms of grace, of promise and fulfilment, of sacrificial love and the response of faith<sup>19</sup>. The christian is therefore free from all external coercion, from written codes and laws, from obligations imposed from outside. He is free from anxiety to observe all the minutiae of rules regarding the details of devotions, and of living up to the entire series of prescriptions. He is free from the crippling fear of failure, seeing that the task is enormous and he himself is weak and small; free from all impersonal and faceless systems because he has been personally spoken to by God in Jesus Christ. For the christian, religion is no longer something which "binds", but a power which liberates. It does not tie one down, or limit the horizons of life or curtail its creativity. It is experienced rather as a new inner space, an expanding spiritual universe, and a living spring in the centre of one's spirit, ceaselessly welling up into eternal life. It is felt as a new strength in one's limbs, which enables one to take up one's bed and walk home after having been a cripple and an observer of the sabbath for thirty eight years. To the christian, religion is no longer a constraint and a chain of laws, but the word and presence of Jesus who sets us free from everything that would shackle us, be it disease which disables the body, or the sabbath (the sacred law) which paralyses the spirit.

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18. Rom 3. 20, 21, 28; 4. 14; 6. 14-18; 7. 4-6; 8. 2; Gal 2. 16, 21, 3. 2, 13-14, 19.

19. Michels, Florence, *Paul and the Law of Love*, Milwaukee, 1967; pp. 11, 15, 19.



## Free for what?

But we are not liberated from law to live in a moral and social vacuum. We are set free for the Spirit and for the love that God has poured into our hearts through it. Christian liberty is conditioned and qualified by christian love. From love comes its specific tonality and vibration, its concrete shape and colour. When we experience God's love reaching out to us in the hands of Jesus, blessing, forgiving and ingathering; when we experience it in the Holy Spirit given into our hearts, we are impelled from within and enabled to respond in faith to God and in love to men. Thus faith active in love and actualized as service, becomes the guiding light, the controlling force, the inspiration and the norm of christian life and action. God's love lodged in our hearts is the source and rule of christian existence. That is why Paul 'set love sharply against the law, and trusted Christians to live freely in love'. We have here a programme of life that is far more demanding than any code of laws<sup>20</sup>.

The Christian is free, but never from the pressure of God's love upon his heart, never from the responsibility of loving and living in love<sup>21</sup>. Paul would surely subscribe to the christian affirmation: 'We are free men, we are nobody's slaves, we are called to freedom, we are allowed to do anything. Only, he would add, 'Anything that is good, is helpful, is surely conducive to the upbuilding of the community.' What the gospel brings is not freedom in empty space, but freedom on this earth, among men and women, hence freedom to care, and to love and to give oneself in order to make others great and free. Self-centredness is sin and slavery. No one should therefore look out for one's own interests; he should consider the interests of others. Freedom is not an excuse for indulging one's self, for it actually consists in love that makes us serve one another. In such love the whole law is summed up, fulfilled and liberated. Paul realized his freedom in making himself everybody's slave in sincerity and love, and in being all things to all men<sup>22</sup>. Freedom is for sacrificial love, and is defined in terms of it.

20. Michels, *op. cit.* p. 40-41.

21. Rom 13. 8-10.

22. 1C 6. 12-14; 9. 19-23; 10. 23-24; Gal 5. 13-15.

We should read Romans 14 to see how freedom works, how it seeks to help and to avoid hurt, how it attends to persons and concrete situations, how tactful and flexible it is, how delicate and respectful, how God-like. When one has read this chapter one cannot help sitting down to reflect how different the story of the christian church and the story of christian spirituality in India would have been had the gospel of freedom in love been there to lead the coming of missions and to shape the policies of churches in this land from the beginning.

So, then, has the christian too a law, the new law, the law of love; of faith, of the Spirit, of Christ? Strictly and ideally there is no law for the Christian, no external norm of action. Otherwise he would still be bound, and the liberating power of Christ's death would be defeated in his life. There is only for the Christian "a new inner source of spiritual energy". The christian does not and should not require external rules to constrain him. In perfect freedom and full openness to the Spirit, he does what God's love and his responsibility to his neighbour demand, and avoids all that might separate him from God or brother. Not that in this present situation of sin and of imperfect openness love needs no safeguards and guideposts, but these are themselves born of love and have for their sole purpose the protection of this inner dynamism, this living flame at the centre of the spirit. And none knows best what can safeguard love but love itself. And so what can external laws be but concrete expressions of "the inner promptings of the Spirit"? This inner reality is the law of Christ and the only law for the christian. Because it is love it will not degenerate into licence; nor will it harden into legalism even when it takes on an external formulation<sup>23</sup>.

"Yes, we have now, as christians, passed far beyond our former state of mind. The laws are still there, but they are no longer to us the measure of the goodness of a man... A man is good who pins his life on Christ... and on faith in the cross of Christ as the way to salvation. This faith gives a man absolute norms of love and sacrifice and fidelity – norms so absolute that they will demand far more of a man than any collection of

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23. Michels, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36; Gal 6. 2; IC 9. 19-29.

laws ever could; but also so absolute that they must be followed even where laws stand in the way; and finally norms so absolute that they make law pale into insignificance as a way to God." It was Christ Jesus who presented us with "the message of love and sacrifice practised even in defiance of what the Law says and threatens."<sup>24</sup>

Here is a freedom that binds itself; that lives by dying, and grows by self-giving. Christian freedom is sacrificial freedom, and is paschal in its mystery. It is a liberty which gives and works itself out for others, bearing others' burdens of sickness, poverty, loneliness, unemployment, illiteracy, untouchability, guilt, shame, war. A liberty which attends to the needs of the community and works and shares.

### The quest continues

A freedom of this kind we need. We may believe that the Spirit is creating it in the hearts of many men and women in our land, in our churches. We may also suspect that often in the churches christianity is too much of an ethic, too much a matter of laws and observances, of authority and conformism. It is too little, perhaps, of discerning love, of attentiveness and understanding, of personal commitment, of heart-relationship to Jesus and to our neighbour, of experience of freedom, responsibility and initiative. Too little perhaps of the joy and enthusiasm and inner spaces of the gospel seems to be present. Religion for us seems to be too much bound by, and to, the past: to customs, to caste and class considerations, to status symbols, easy and accustomed devotions, and neat formulations. But we are willing today to examine what fetters these have forged for our spirit; and to let Jesus liberate our hearts into the freedom of God. We are willing to be re-educated and enriched by the risk and pain of the freedom which Jesus has won for us.

Vidyajyoti  
Delhi

Samuel Rayan

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24. Quesnell, Quentin, *The Gospel of Christian Freedom*, NY, 1969, pp. 94-95, 112.

# Freedom, an Essential Feature of Hinduism

Observers of the Hindu religious phenomena of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be richly rewarded by the varied developments in it during this period. A number of reformers attempted a re-presentation of Hinduism. Men like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna, Dayananda Saraswati and, in our own days, Gandhiji, tried to strip Hinduism of its outmoded ways and renovate it in the light of modern humanistic and religious concepts. But for this they did not have to introduce alien principles or values. What they had to do was to disengage, from its own inner resources, values capable of transforming society. Thus Gandhiji's *My Experiments with Truth* can be regarded as living example of this aspect of Hinduism: its infinite capacity to preserve intact the essentials, and to reinterpret these to fit contemporary needs. Here Gandhiji displays deep moorings in his ancient faith and at the same time a laudable departure from traditional customs and beliefs in non-essentials.

And yet, faced with the most persistent reluctance to part with something of the traditional way of teaching, or of worshipping God, or even of cultivating the land, among the hard-core of the Hindus who constitute the big majority of adherents of living Hinduism, one would wonder how freedom as a way of life could thrive in this land. It is well known that even among the learned there exists at times the most ardent attachment to traditional ways of thinking and living, even when they are manifestly incongruous. Fresh insights in the fields of science and humanism do not seem to present them with the call to discard the old, and welcome the opportunities for growth. Nevertheless the old and the new exist together. For example, *śraddha* is an Upaniṣadic concept. Now the Upaniṣads are accepted as a synonym for free thought. But *śraddha* the necessary condition for this, implies secrecy, aloofness, uncritical acceptance of the truth communicated by the *guru*, and complete conformity to it, with-



out questioning. The phenomenon of co-existence of the old and the new, which are often irreconcilable, may lead one to hasty generalizations such as the idea that the Hindu is incapable of free dissent, and unable to part with meaningless customs and beliefs. Although such impressions are not wholly unfounded, they surely call for deeper probing.

### Vedic freedom

Delve into the historical residue of Vedic India; we encounter there the result of a long-drawn-out inner conflict. Vedic religion is an effort at a comprehensive interpretation of the world, its relation to its source, and the impact of these upon man and his destiny. The One, conceived by the philosopher-poets as manifesting itself as many, such as Indra, Varuna, the gods, and the world, is the goal of Vedic man's reflections. Man is seen, in the Vedic hymns, as seeking to enter into contact with the gods, and to communicate with them through diverse symbols. In this process he displays remarkable freedom and initiative. This is seen in the very abundance of the hymns, in the exuberance of joy and spirit of optimism which characterize the *Samhita*, in the endless variety of ways invented as means of approach to the gods. It is present in particular in the fearless readiness to admit, even welcome, religious pluralism, to let a multiplicity of names and forms and traditions thrive side by side, to risk possible conflicts, and to seek in all of them an underlying common experience and a universal truth.

It is in this process that the Vedic poet discovered the conflict mentioned above, with forces which eventually he called *Vrtra* or *Vala*. The gods are on man's side, battling against these forces, and therefore the forces are always on the run, always losing. In this mythological representation of a vaguely observed, yet real and living truth, we have the picture of the conflict in the sensitive soul of the Vedic Indian. Whereas his distant kinsman in Persia, under the aegis of Zoroaster, grouped all these forces into one chief foe, the parallel god of evil, the Vedic Indian transformed them into mythological figures. Freedom from their pernicious sway is the chief goal of his prayers, and here, perhaps, is the beginning of sacrifices.

## Experience of unfreedom

With the discovery of sacrifice as the best means to please the gods early Indian religion entered a new phase of development: the era of Brahmanism with its orthodoxy and rigidity. Sacrifices were multiplied; elaborate rituals grew around them and finally enslaved the worshipper, reducing him to a mechanical performer of magical rites. Excessive veneration of ancestors (*pitarah*) and gods, an exaggerated concept of the inspired character of the sacred texts (*śrutis*), and the late rise of Upaniṣadic thinking, contributed to the triumph of ritual rigidity. This choked the growth of the concept of God; religion became dry, inflexible and intolerable. Sacrifice became another god, more powerful than the gods themselves, and the performance of sacrifice began to be looked upon as the chief religious activity of society. The result was that every aspect of life—agriculture, education, social life, marriage and death—came under the domination of priests and of a narrow concept of religion drained of all spontaneity and freedom. Probably the development of the idea of a personal god, or monotheism, was delayed, or side tracked by factors we cannot discuss here; and that perhaps is the reason why human freedom, in the service of the gods of the Brahmanic days, suffered greatly. Even today this negative influence is discernible in the mentality of a large number of people, and to this must be attributed their traditional reluctance to discard age-old customs.

## Two movements of spiritual freedom

But the vigour and vitality of human and religious values asserted themselves in the form of two powerful developments: Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. Buddhism unhesitatingly discarded the very concept of ritual, delved deep into the interior of man, strove to penetrate the very essence of the human condition, and affirmed boldly that spiritual liberation was in no way served by these rite-heavy magical performances, by the restrictive and inhibitive framework of the Brahmanic religious rigidity. This Buddhist voice was too loud and clear to go unheard. Not only the Buddhist empire of Asoka but almost the whole of the Far East accepted this call, this new interpretation of religion. When Asoka, in his famous Rock Edict No XV declared that, "All religious sects should live harmoniously in all

parts of my dominion" he was immortalizing this victory of the inner life of man, the essential freedom of man in religious matters, discovered and expounded after prolonged meditation and reflection; "People should learn and respect the fundamentals of one another's *Dharma*... There should be a growth of the essentials of *Dharma* among men of all sects" (Rock Edict XII). These unique declarations of an emperor centuries ago reflect the truth that freedom lies at the heart of any religion worth the name. This is not a reflection of a minority that employs new tactics in apologetics. In spite of repeated onslaughts, spearheaded by ruthless logicians like Sankara, Buddhism did its work, and this mode of thinking became the very tone of India's attitude in religious matters.

Even before this, the other development was already going on. Fresh spiritual vitality and new religious insights were born not of sacrifice, but free exercise in interiority. They grew into a mighty force which dethroned the plurality of gods who, however, by way of compromise, were accommodated within the new domain of the one *Brahman*. The emphasis on ritualism was done away with, and all rigidity broken down. Once released from these bonds, man's gaze turned inward, dwelt upon that imperishable substance he termed the *ātman*, and rejoiced at the discovery that this inner indefinable something in man is universal, spiritual, transcendent, and hence beyond the hold of constraining systems or persons or influences. Even dogmas were questioned. Thus one sage dared doubt a cardinal philosophic tenet of the ancients. The *R̥gveda* had taught that there was *asat* in the beginning. This sage, in secrecy and with restraint, asks the disciple, how that could be. He then asserts that there could only be *sat* in the beginning, and only from that could all the universe come into existence. This was typical of the free and bold thinking and mode of worshipping that gradually gained ground. This attitude opened the way for all that the Upaniṣads discovered in the field of philosophy and theology. *Atman*, conceived of as potentially infinite, universal in character, untainted by things created, capable of, or actually enjoying merger with the *Brahman*, stood in no need of mediators or sacrifices. This intangible inner spiritual energy in man, defying the most powerful scrutiny of logic, beyond the sway of traditional ritual, transcending the subject-object bipolar relationship that is help-

to accompany conscious knowledge, was thought of as present in all.

Apparently the core of the Upaniṣadic teaching is the *Brahman-ātman* identity, as interpreted traditionally. One in substance with the *Brahman* the *ātman* enjoys untold privileges. It is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unaffected doer. It is uncontaminated by anything limited. Mantra, karma, magic, the actions of the body, sacrifice,—none of these can in any way influence the *ātman*. It has its own laws, its own openness and atmosphere where alone it finds relish and its own identity. Being essentially knowledge or consciousness, the *ātman* is its own light, its own guide, its own delight and bliss. Hence no other guide, no other light, no other bliss, can enrich it or in any way help it. It needs a temporary self-discovery, and once that is achieved, it is on its own wings, makes for its own goals, and has the means to their attainment. Maker of its own destiny, the *ātman* regards every other aids as *ārtam* as fraught with misery only. To discover nothing but its true self, and that by its own very essence, is the main purpose of this self. Evidently the Brahmanic vision of salvation cannot play any substantial role in this new understanding of the *ātman*. It has no masters, no ritual, no interpretation; Thus the chief insight of the Upaniṣadic religion is the concept of the *ātman* as enjoying unlimited freedom in its very nature and exercising this freedom in its own right. This is the central idea dominating the religion of the Upaniṣads, and distinguishing it from traditions which preceded it.

What were the consequences? First of all religion escaped the rigidity of traditionalism because of which it had become quite hateful among thinking men of the time. It became deeper and more respectable, and if India today has any religious depth and universality of outlook it is due to the new way of thinking opened up by the Upaniṣads. Because of the stress laid upon knowledge as the means of liberation of the *ātman*, freedom of the spirit gained ascendancy in so far as access to this inner realm of divine experience is an entirely personal acquisition. Enlightenment and freedom became concomitant phenomena. Religion thus became associated with growth of freedom. The wisdom of the sages, the merits and values of yoga techniques and even of sacrifice to some extent, had only a limited and



subordinate role to play in this process. Knowledge, the illuminating force within, became the key to the liberation of man, and this is not dependent upon men, customs, authority, dogmas, systems and similar forms with which traditional religion had become identified. A god could be brought down to the place of the sacrifice according to the Brahmanic belief: but now knowledge, the new liberating force, replaces both god and sacrifice. Knowledge is freedom. This opens up immense possibilities:

“The self is attained through teaching, intelligence, or much learning. This Soul (*ātman*) is obtainable by truth, by austerity (*tapas*), by proper knowledge (*jñāna*), by the student’s life of chastity (*brahmacharya*) constantly (practised) (Mund. Up. 3, 1.5)

A still wider range of possibilities is offered by the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. One can worship Brahman as the *Udgīta*, as the sacred syllable *OM* as *Taj-ja-lan* etc. Nārada is instructed by Sanatkumara in similar ways. Nārada is told that one can begin by worshipping the Name as Brahman, for “He who reverences Name as Brahman as far as Name goes,— so far he has unlimited freedom, he who reverences Name as Brahman” (Ch. Up. 7, 221).<sup>\*</sup> Then he goes on enumerating: speech, mind, conception (*samkalpa*), thought (*citta*), meditation (*dhyāna*), understanding (*viñāna*), strength, food, water, heat, space, memory, hope, life (*prāṇa*) — one can begin by revering these and eventually one will be led up to the height of knowledge and possession of it. This indeed is a departure from the old Brahmanic days when one was not offered many ways of coming to Brahman. It is this universality of approach that makes the religion of the Upaniṣads appealing to all. God is infinite, and there are countless approaches by which man can come to Him; this is the summary of the Upaniṣads.

There is a further reason why the Upaniṣadic approach appeals to people. Knowledge is also regarded as a transformation, in so far as it transforms the subject into something higher than itself and more in line with the divine essence that is considered to be concealed by the different layers of corporeal

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<sup>\*</sup> R. E. Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*.

existence. He who knows this becomes Brahman: this is the ever-recurring theme of the Upaniṣads. Here the next phase of Hinduism is already beginning to show itself: love as the highest ambition of the 'knowing *ātman*'. Here knowledge and love become one single force in the task of transformation. This we find in the Bhakti form of religion.

### Gita's understanding of freedom

God as a person, becoming an *avatāra*, and offering man his love: that is the new and popular form of *bhakti*. By affirming that "knowledge — sacrifice is better" (Gita, 4, 33) and that "thou shalt cross the ocean of sin by the boat of knowledge" (36), the *Gita* tries to uphold both the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, before proceeding further to expound its own doctrine. Even the deepest intuitive experiences of a Yajñavalkya may have to be transcended. The *Gita* asserts that though knowledge is liberation, yet it is too hard for the ordinary people to meditate on the abstract Brahman ("Greater is the travail of those whose mind is fixed on the Unmanifest": The *Gita*, 12, 5). Love is a precious quality of the heart, capable of eliciting the most loyal service and sacrifice. It is made the very foundation of the new religion of the *Gita* where Kṛṣṇa is presented as the personal God, offering love and friendship to man, and assuring him that this is the best means of liberation. The *Gita* boldly proclaims that the one inhibitive force which hampers all men, namely *karma* and its consequences, can be overcome by the simplest and the typically human of all resources: love. Love dissipates the inherited residue of *karma*, dissolves its stain, and liberates the *ātman*, in order to lead it to the enjoyment of friendship and love with a God who is presented as an *avatāra*. Thus for the first time, the simplest and the most attractive way of reaching the religious goal is offered to man, after the Vedic days when devotion to a personal God had but a feeble manifestation.

The imperishable, unborn, ever-existing 'embodied soul' is told that the Lord of this soul is full of compassion for it, ready to reveal to it the different grades of love which are the best means of liberation. It is assured that by adhering to this new path it will undoubtedly come to Him. With love as the

basis of this new way to God, Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna in the different steps;" Cast all your actions on Me, set your mind on Me, and if that is difficult offer service to me, dedicate all the actions and their fruits to Me." Thus step by step the Lord Kṛṣṇa invites Arjuna to a life of intimacy, trust and friendship, reveals to him for the first time the unexplored avenues of this life of love, and invites him to ascend higher, and thus approach Him in the love-filled security that is His abode. The entire *Gita* is thus an account of this hitherto-undisclosed dimension of Hinduism as a religion in which a noble relationship exists between the soul and God. The devotees are free to offer Him any kind of worship—the only condition being that it should be moved by love! "Whatever form one desires to worship in faith and devotion, in that very form I make that faith of his secure" (7, 21). Such is the assurance of the Lord.

One can solve the perennial problem of Hindu religious thinking—the bonds of Karma—by performing disinterested action, and disinterestedness consists in performing actions for the sake of Kṛṣṇa, and not for selfish motives. Disinterestedness purifies the soul of all stain, and enables it to attach itself with greater affinity to the Lord. Here the universal will of the creator and the will of the individual soul are expected to find harmony and solidarity, and this is only because of the love that subordinates the latter to the former. Once the soul attains this identity, once it is immersed in the great ocean of love, it discovers that it is endowed with immense possibilities. It is in an ocean of love, vast and deep. Religion in this atmosphere is rich and elevating. When the soul looks back upon the narrow and restraining atmosphere of traditional religion it notices the difference. Here there is no particular mode in which alone God may be worshipped: any mode will do; what matters is love. One does not have to depend on the exact position of the Brahmin priest at the sacrifice, on the size of the ladle, on the quality of the ghee, or on the number of the Soma leaves, on the auspiciousness of the hour and the day of the month, on the regularity of the performance, on the exactness in the recitation of the *mantras*, on the flawlessness of the ritual, or on the largeness and munificence of the *yajamāna's* gifts to the priests. Relegating all such blind adherence to the ignorance of men, Kṛṣṇa boldly declares the essence of true religion; "Any

offering of leaf, flower, fruit or water, made to Me in devotion, by an earnest soul, I lovingly accept" (The *Gita* 9, 26). Whatever one does, even though it be eating, or sacrifice or gift, even the acts of *tapasya*, all become meritorious and acceptable to Me, provided there is love. "Some offer sacrifice of Yajna, others that of hearing, some sound and senses, some do offer material gifts, others do the imparting of knowledge, still others the restraint of vital energy—diverse as these are, all are laudable, here, in this religion of love and freedom." And finally comes the summing-up of all Hinduism:

"So doing thou shalt be released from the bondage of action, yielding good and evil fruit; having accomplished both remuneration and performance, thou shalt be released (from birth and death) and come to Me" (The *Gita* 9, 28).

The closer one comes to God, the more immense does He appear, the more open do the avenues leading up to Him appear, and the larger the degree of freedom and spontaneity one experiences. This does not mean that the old forms of worship are condemned; the old need not be discarded altogether. The old can be retained; one need not renounce the world to attain *siddhi*. Sinners and outcastes of society need not despair; they are offered the same means as the rest of men. Vaiśyas and śūdras too are invited to the same goal. Warriors, priests, brahmins, peasants and the learned, all can achieve this new goal, provided all have the same note of love and confidence in the Lord, that is the only condition. "In every way, O Partha, the path men follow is Mine" (4. 11). This is the assurance of the Lord.

To minds accustomed to regard religion just in one mould alone and to which all other manifestations of it are perverse or untrue, the Hindu world can be bewildering. Too many gods, too many systems of philosophy, too many interpretations of the same *śruti*, all of which are confusing. But the Hindu approach is quite different. The whole cosmic process is viewed as (the result of) a conflict. In the Vedas, it is the gods and their enemies; in the Brahmanas, the same gods and the Asuras; in the Upaniṣads light against darkness or knowledge against ignorance; in the Samkhya the *prakṛti* versus the *puruṣa*, and



so on. As time passes, new versions of the same theme appear. Accordingly the religious interpretation also changes. It may seem that glaring contradictions are unwittingly reconciled, points of the conflict solved unsatisfactorily. But for the Hindu, for whom religion is a personal attitude and salvation a personal achievement, the best means is what he himself chooses. He knows his gods are tolerant of his errors; and his own mind is sympathetic towards opposing views. All this is based on the conviction that there are but different waves in the same ocean, different moments in the same flux of time. Hence no individual or group arrogates to itself special powers and privileges over against others. The individual is more important than society, and the latter cannot, in any way, deprive the former of his freedom, even if this were done with the most promising of all assurances – an easy and secure way to liberation. No, even at the feet of an experienced *guru*, a disciple has to choose the road by himself. This perhaps, is one of the reasons why Hinduism is no organised religion as such. To anyone who cares to study it seriously, Hinduism presents, in its inner life, invaluable data all of which converge on one significant point: personal freedom as the foundation of man's movement towards God.

T. K. John

# The Jesus Movement

*Jesus Christ Superstar*<sup>1</sup>, the rock opera, was a box-office hit in Broadway-New York, and the best selling record album in 1972, *Godspell*<sup>2</sup>, a musical version of Matthew's Gospel, was an acclaimed success in Paris. London staged both the musicals with packed crowds for months on end in 1971-72. Certain European journals<sup>3</sup> commented on this Jesus-phenomenon in the capitals of the West with a question: Has Jesus Christ become merely a theatrical theme?

But *Time* (June 21, 1971) called the phenomenon 'Jesus Revolution' taking account of the various movements whose new rebel cry is - 'Jesus is coming'. Indeed, the theatrical projection of Jesus was only a commercialized expression of the sub-culture of the young people who were turning away from sex, drugs and occult mysticism to Jesus in whom they have discovered anew their true freedom. This is why journals like *America* (26 June 1971), *Informations Catholiques Internationales* (15 October 1971 and 15 February 1972) and *Concilium* (November 1972) took cognisance of the *Jesus Revolution* as a significant movement in the decade.

## The Movement and its beginnings

What *Time* did was to bring different currents together and present them as a single movement of the *Jesus Revolution*. One has in fact, to distinguish<sup>1</sup> the various groups among them clearly, such as the 'Jesus People' also known as 'Street-Christians' or 'Jesus Freaks' who have blended counter-culture and conser-

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1. Refer to *Time*, October 25, 1971.

2. It is the old English word for 'Gospel'; the author John Michael Tebelak did not know this fact when he chose the title; for him 'Godspell' is meant power of God, the 'Spell' of God (cf. *Inf. Cath.* 15 Feb 72).

3. *London Telegraph* and *Figaro* in Paris.

4. *Concilium* p. 105 (Nov. 72).

vative religion and the eccentric 'Fellow Travellers'<sup>5</sup> with two branches called 'The Way' and 'The Process'; and the Neo-Pentecostals<sup>6</sup> (they should not be mixed with up Catholic Pentecostals) who have been leading the charismatic renewal in the USA after Vatican II.

Here the Jesus Movement is considered as presented by the Rev. Edward Plowman in his book of that name,<sup>7</sup> an account of the Christian revolutionaries in action.

The Jesus Movement could technically be called the underground church, though no one in it regards the movement as this mainly because the word conjures up images of clandestine practices. Moreover such a name does not fit the open-to-all movement.

The term *Jesus Movement* is used in various senses to describe different sub-cultural, non-traditional and non-established patterns: 1. The New "Communes" 2. The "Neo-Pentecostal" groups in which denominational differences are ignored 3. Evangelists who seek to build up believers inside a sub-culture of -Pop, Rock etc. (without uprooting them from their given milieu). Plowman traces its beginnings to the 'Love Movement' in the Haigh-Ashbury district of San Francisco in summer of 1967. "That was 1967, the year of vanguard of today's swarming underground church."<sup>8</sup>

Jean Houston, co-author of *Varieties of Psychological Experience*, theorized in San Francisco that year: "Society is now in transition from economic man to religious man his religious instinct has been suppressed so long, it is popping out in all directions."<sup>9</sup>

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5. *Time* 6 Sept. 71, p. 60.

6. Ranagham, Kevin and Dorothy, *Catholic Pentecostals*, Paulist Press, New York '69.

7. *The Jesus Movement*, Hodder and Stoughton: London (1971).

8. *The Jesus Movement*, p. 9.

9. Quoted in *The Jesus Movement*, p. 36.

The Jesus Movement should be viewed in the context of the Revivals of the 60's in America. To begin with, the Flower-Children (Hippies) went to the mountains to meditate and practise yoga and to wonder about future incarnations. By a curious twist LSD apparently triggered that spiritual search. Then, the Beatles came out with an album openly celebrating the psychedelic way; they huddled with the Maharshi Yogi for spiritual counsel. They confessed to him that they had been seeking real spiritual experience for a long time, but that drugs got them nowhere. Later the Maharshi too seems to have disappointed them.

Then religious instinct popped out towards astrology and other occult forms. Spiritualists who claimed contact with the dead gained new followings. Horoscopes aroused great interest. While some went in for Zen, others adopted weird sexual rites and even witchcraft practices to find their fulfilment.

When the first Christian coffee-house in Haigh-Ashbury opened in 1967, the people of the Jesus Movement did not have to argue for the existence of the supernatural. The young who were searching for new leaders, honouring new heroes, experimenting with new codes and ingesting new chemicals, were beginning to be tired of their gods and oppressed by their religions. Some among them were drawn to Jesus as the way to freedom.

From 1967 on, an ever increasing number of sex-addicts and 'acid heads' turned to Jesus to find liberation. Today "Communes" or "Christian Homes" are multiplying like loaves and fishes for youngsters in search of true freedom. "The Movement is like a glacier; it is growing and there is no stopping it"<sup>10</sup> says 'Jesus-Rock' solo artist Larry Norman. No wonder, Billy Graham, in his book *The Jesus Generation*<sup>11</sup> sees the Jesus Movement as the most outstanding revolution now taking place and the greatest revolution of the century in America. Today, would not Beatle John Lennon retract what he said in 1966, that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ?

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10. Quoted in *Time* June 21, 1971, p. 32.

11. *The Jesus Generation*, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1971.



This does not at all mean that the majority of young American people are suddenly turning to Christ; they are still a minority, but significant enough not to be ignored.

Hence, in the few following pages only the characteristic features and the significance of the Jesus Movement are considered. The reader is referred to the book *The Jesus Movement* for the complex growth and sociological situation of this resurgence which are too involved to be discussed here.

### The Marks of the Jesus Movement

If any single feature clearly identifies the Jesus Movement, it is the total belief that "Jesus is alive and well." Christ is felt as an immediate Presence and those who adopt this doctrine act as if divine intervention guides every movement of theirs. They insist uncompromisingly that one has to have an encounter with Jesus Christ to be a Christian.

The following reply of a 'Jesus-freak' as reported in the *Informations Internationales* (15 Oct., 71) points to their passionate and convinced belief in Jesus. "Jesus is, for us, a Reality, a living force; Jesus is there... we know him, we feel him. That is sufficient. When we have problems, when we are in need of someone, we go to Jesus..."<sup>12</sup> Jesus is not only believed in but lived with and experienced in their weakness and power in daily life. Briefly, Jesus means for them the source of a newly-found liberating power.

Bible-study and group-prayer seem to be two further characteristic practices of the movement. They see the Bible as the irrefutable accurate word of God, solving all their problems from the cosmic to the trivial; the Bible is the ultimate "how-to" book for them. This sounds like the believers of Berea of whom it is recorded in the Acts: "They received the message with great eagerness studying the scriptures everyday to see whether it was as they said." (17: 11).

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12. *Inf. Cath.* p. 12.

Small groups meet during the week for prayer and sharing of experience in the Christian life. A model prayer-service as narrated in *The Jesus Movement*<sup>13</sup> indicates the spirit and structure of their 'Body-Life' service as it is called. It happens every Sunday night; nearly 1,000 pack into the Bible Church, California; three-fourths or more are under 30, a number of these are drug converts. A leader begins by saying "This is the family, the body of Christ; we need each other. Let us share."

One after another, persons all over the auditorium stand and speak. One tells how he has solved his drug-problem; another tells of the new insight he got in Bible study. "A woman gives the keys of her family's second car to a student who need transportation for work." Other needs, lights and items of good news are shared; there are hushed moments of anguish and prayer. An offering is announced: "Give as you are able. If you have need, take money from the plate." Then they sing. Finally, the teacher takes over, Bible in hand. Nearly everyone has a Bible. Many underline and note passages as the teacher expounds. Questions are asked. Then there are a closing prayer and a song as all hold hands: "We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord... And they know we are Christians by our love..." Most linger, talking, listening, singing... in small groups.

The pattern in itself is not unique: it resembles one that is commonly used in any of the charismatic prayer-groups today.

### **Movement - Music**

Music, the *lingua franca* of youth, has become the favourite medium of the Jesus Movement. Whatever be the sources of the Gospel-music revolution, the 'Movement' people see the fantastic opportunities they have, of proclaiming the Gospel in the idiom of the day. For they are convinced that pop music is the great common market where the young people of America meet - urban poor and small-town middle-class Americans alike - (surveys indicate that up to 90% of America's teen-agers tune in to rock-stations.) To the Jesus music people, the big issue

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13. pp. 119-120.

is not rock itself, but 'who is in the driver's seat - calling the tunes.' They are convinced that surely 'rock' communicates the Gospel. Certain songs indicate how simple and straight forward is the appeal:

We're all gathered here  
Because we all believe.  
If there is a doubter in the crowd,  
We ask you not to leave;  
Give a listen to the story....

.....

Sing a new song  
Song of salvation  
Got a new life now  
I'm a new creation.

No doubt, the Jesus-music is cracking through the tradition-bound sound barriers of churches.

### "Communes"

The Jesus-people often cluster in 'communes' or as they prefer to call them 'Christian houses'. Plowman, the historian of the movement, estimates that there are about 600 of them across the USA. Some have colourful names (Rejoice Always, Good Samaritan etc.) Most have at least minimal organization with 'elders' in charge, and all demand high standards of morality and discipline. A sign posted inside one house says: "No sex, no drugs, no hassles - Jesus is Lord". Often daily programmes are posted designating the time for meals, Bible Study, chores, street witnessing, group prayer etc. However, leadership, structures, sizes and style differ very much from house to house<sup>14</sup>

But, why 'communes' in the first place? The first Christian houses of the Jesus Movement beginning with the one in Haight-Ashbury in 1967, were established in order to liberate bodily the new converts from their immediate environment of drug-place, free-sex and far-out cultism etc.

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14. One could refer to *The Jesus Movement*, pp. 56-59 for the details of community-life.

For example, "the house of Christian Love was born from a drug distribution centre, California, in March 1970.... People from all walks of life, mostly the young, began packing into the three bedroom home for nightly Bible Studies and prayer meetings. Many of these young people were longhairs who felt unwelcome in institutional congregations, saw too much hypocrisy in denominational assemblies, and realised specific needs and concerns were not being met or shared."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the "communes" were originally formed to protect and foster the new freedom found in Jesus, as they realized that they needed a structure of mutual support to integrate their life anew.

However, today's Christian Houses are more apt to be full-blown social experiments, the inmates sincerely striving to experience what it means to be "one in Spirit" and to function as "the Body of Christ."

Though the evangelistic mission, street preaching, for example, is part and parcel of the community programme, the prime bond that holds everyone together is 'Love of each other'. For, they say, "As a community we do not have special skills or techniques and we have found that the most effective means of evangelism is to bring people into the living situation of a love for one another."<sup>16</sup>

They profess - "we are a Christian community based on 100% discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our main concern is to try creative approaches to making Gospel principles a functional part of life such as *how to be a Christian without becoming legalistically religious.*"

On the basis of personal visits and interviews Plowman believes that the major reason for the rise and spread of the new religious-oriented communes and communities is the failure of our homes and churches to fulfil their intended functions. Ideally, the Christian Houses seek to integrate and implement the roles of both the home and the church. True, given the human conditions, it does not always work out well: nevertheless it is

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15. *The Jesus Movement*, p. 61.

16. *America*, 12 Feb '72, p. 145.



working sufficiently well enough, closing social, economic, racial and generation gaps.

### Significance of the Jesus Movement

Is it not just another bad "trip"? Have not these kids reduced Jesus to a folk-hero? Does it not look like one more passing cultural phenomenon of our times? In short, is not all this just a fad? The answer is not a simple "Yes" or "No." Some say it is an "enthusiast"-movement, and sometimes it is. Some others say, it is blind to the social implications of the Gospel (concerning war, racial justice, poverty, pollution etc.), and in some cases it is. Yet others say, it is anti-institutional, and in some measure it is.

Given the commercial exploitation and mass-media manipulation, the movement might appear to some as a "new extremism that worships a kind of Jesus - a hip Jesus of the cheap-grace, quick fix, the easy answer..." Indeed, excesses and defects do exist in the movement (for example: Jesus shirts, Jesus people wrist-watches etc.). In some cases, the aberrations are over-reactions against depressing conditions in the church - apathy - in the clergy, stifled worship, absence of fervour in faith, hypocrisy in morals etc.

To one who looks beyond and beneath these reactions and shortcomings - like religious sociologist Andrew Greeley, or the research scholar in psychology Jean Houston - the Jesus Movement looks like a religious response of a generation disappointed with the promises of atheistic humanism and the so-called virtues of the Secular-City. To the unprejudiced, the movement appears as a new way in which the young express their religiousness in freedom without drugs, sex and occult. This is why, perhaps, evangelist Billy Graham says: If it is a fad, I welcome it."<sup>17</sup>

Hence the theological significance of the Jesus Movement is its personal discovery of freedom in Jesus Christ. The Jesus-people have testified that drugs and sex have not answered their search for freedom. The drugs just made them aware of the inner problems and they looked worse and worse to themselves

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17. Quoted in *Time* 21 June 71. p. 39.

even to the point of suicide. Sex too had enslaved them to their passions dissipating their youthful energies. But in their turning to Jesus, they have experienced a new power that has liberated them from their addictions and servile habits. In Jesus, they confess, they have discovered for themselves a power which does not possess them (like their previous obsessions), but a love that gives itself; and so they feel free to say 'Yes' or 'No' without being overpowered or oppressed. With this new kind of freedom which they enjoy, they are able to say: "After Jesus, you may use drugs, but you would not need them."

What is spiritually significant in the Movement is the transparent personal conviction of faith and the freshness of Christian joy that the Jesus people are able to communicate. The testimonies of certain Catholics involved in the Movement reveal how their faith has been made alive: "Our faith since becoming involved with this movement is now a living thing, experiential, not obediential (conventional)..... Our lives used to be controlled by the culture rather than by the power of our belief. We find, now, that we are more influencing than influenced - a counter-culture, if you will."<sup>18</sup>

Ecumenically, the Jesus Movement is making a considerable impact. It cuts across nearly all the social dividing lines - from crew to long hairs, right to left, rich to poor; it is attracting Roman Catholics, Protestants of every persuasion, Jews and even people with no religion at all.

Through experience of direct contacts, says Plowman, "I have found little bitterness among them and almost no inclination to mount a holy war of liberation against the formal church.... They are not flag-waving destructionists bent on overthrow; basically they seek spiritual renewal. They hope, the wider church will join their quest.... unlike the multitudes of hippie converts, they have not dropped out of the mainstream of society. Many are even in their usual pews and places of service on Sunday - but they also worship with kindred spirits in cell-like meetings later in the week... young and old alike told me what they really want is involvement in a dynamic community of

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18. *America* 12 Feb 72, p. 113.

faith, where Jesus is not shut out by tradition-bound forms and agendas, indifference in the pews, or unbelief and secularism in the pulpit. The result: new groups inside and outside the Churches.’<sup>19</sup>

Surely we cannot regard them as imprudent kids, bothersome pebbles in the sandalled feet of the messengers anointed to bring the Good News; perhaps, they are the stones that were to cry out when the Gospel was not preached! One is reminded of the Lord’s saying: Whoever is not against us is for us (Mk 9: 40).

### **The Jesus Movement is relevant for India**

What relevance has the movement for India, although it seems to have little impact even in Europe?

No movement in our times of mass-media is an isolated phenomenon. In fact, youth culture has become a universal language. It becomes all the more relevant owing to the fact that youth in India today is in a state of political unrest, searching for economic security and professional guarantee. To them the Jesus Movement could convey a message of inner freedom that reveals the emptiness of economic security and the falsity of social-status, and professional snobbery. For one of the significant traits of the Jesus Movement is that its followers feel that an inner power has been unleashed in them which makes it possible for them to identify themselves as children of God. They become quite sure of what they are and what their destiny is. Because of this certainty about their identity they do not have the old need for others to give them a feeling of being worth something. “Psychologists would call them self-actualising individuals who have found springs within themselves from which to draw.” As they feel, they are one inside themselves (a self-discovery in freedom); they have power to relate and create “communes” and “houses”. Surely, this is the type of inner security and group solidarity that Indian youth is in need of today, as in any other developing country.

The Jesus Movement promises to our youth a new kind of Revolution as Charles Reich, in his book *Greening of America*,

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19. The Jesus Movement, pp. 10 and 121.

predicts; one that originates with the individual and that, in the end will change the structures of society. It will not require violence to succeed but an inner freedom from addictions, pressures and prejudices an experience of liberation that would manifest itself in freedom for others.

Secondly, the Jesus Movement offers to the missions in India example of zeal for evangelization. The Jesus-people are afire with a consuming passion for sharing their faith with others. Faith, they say, is not alive if not shared. 'Fresh-faced wide-eyed young girls and earnest young men, badger businessmen and shoppers on Hollywood Roads, near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington witnessing for Christ with breathless exhortations.'<sup>20</sup>

These young people go everywhere preaching the Gospel - into slums, ghettos, theatres, record-shops and night-clubs. It is their simplicity in sharing the faith-experience, and their spontaneity in preaching the Gospel that the Indian Church lacks today. The Jesus Movement assures us that we need have no inhibitions or make apologies or adopt strategies, to evangelize provided our faith in Jesus is transparent. At a time when the Church in India is considering mission in terms of "dialogue" and "development" the Movement comes as a call never to set aside the direct sharing of the Gospel of Jesus all along the roads and streets of India.

The significance and the relevance of the Jesus Movement can be summed up in the words of the Catholic paper *America*: "Undeniably, there is an extraordinary religious revival happening in USA... A Christian must be glad that the name of Jesus is widely proclaimed... We must attempt seriously to respond to the religious aspirations of so many young people... Of course, discernment is imperative to find out the genuine from the propaganda... Let us hope that the Jesus Movement would continue to flourish long after the mass-media would have stopped talking about it.'<sup>21</sup>

Paris.

X. Irudayaraj

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20. *Time*, June 71, p. 32.      21. *America*, 26 June 71.



# What our Friends Think

Whatever might have been their practice, the Christian Churches and other great religions of the world have affirmed, for centuries past, the brotherhood of man and the dignity of the human person, and the meaning and significance of human freedom. Thinkers outside the pale of organised religions, and at times others whom we label atheists or agnostics have also tried to give an answer to questions like: How should one human being deal with another? What type of behaviour is beneficial to both parties in an interaction-situation? It is wonderful how some non-religious thinkers have come by the way of experiment and science to prescribe "Love your neighbour as you love yourself". Some of them have also shown how the precept can be practised in concrete situations of life. In this essay I wish to touch upon some insights gained by certain non-religious thinkers, into the dignity of the human person, and into the meaning and significance of human freedom and of the brotherhood of man, and to examine some of their applications of these to concrete spheres of life.

Carl Rogers, a well known educationalist and psychotherapist, attaches much importance to experience. He thinks that religious dogmas often tend to restrain people from relying on their experiences and fully interpreting them. In fact it was a consequence of his methodology of relying on personal experience and not taking dogmatic propositions for granted, that he left the Union Theological Seminary where he was studying to become a minister of his Church, and renounced his faith in any organized form of Christianity. His attitude to religions in their organized forms is clear from one of his statements: "It seems to me it would be a horrible thing to have to profess a set of beliefs, in order to remain in one's profession. I wanted to find a field in which I could be sure my freedom of thought would not be limited."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *On Becoming a Person. A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*, Carl R. Rogers, Ph. D., Western Behavioral Science Institute La Jolla, California, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1961. page 8.

After over forty years of experience in the class-room and the psychotherapeutic clinic, Rogers was confirmed in his conviction regarding self-directed learning and self-directed therapy. The emphasis in the two processes of education and therapy is on human freedom. Stated briefly, at the root of his approach lies the conviction that human freedom is trustworthy. It is well equipped to safeguard the individual's well-being as well as that of the society in which he lives. Given absolute respect for others' freedom people tend to develop in the direction of maturity and change beneficial to themselves and to society.

To those who have a traditionalistic understanding of original sin, the need of obligatory attendance at Mass, and of being ruled by a voluminous code of canon law, Carl Rogers' trust in human freedom may be unintelligible. His trust in human freedom is clear in many of his writings. In one place he says: "I find it significant that when individuals are prized as persons, the values they select do not run the full gamut of possibilities. I do not find in such a climate of freedom, that one person comes to value fraud and murder and thievery, while another values a life of self-sacrifice and another values only money. Instead, there seems to be a deep and underlying thread of commonality. I dare to believe that when the human being is inwardly free to choose whatever he deeply values, he tends to value those objects, experiences and goals which contribute to his own survival, growth and development, and to the survival and development of others. I hypothesize that it is characteristic of the human organism to prefer such actualizing and socialized goals when he is exposed to growth-promoting climate.

"A corollary to what I have been saying is that in any culture, given a climate of respect and freedom in which he is valued as a person, the mature individual would tend to choose and prefer these same value directions. It means that though the individual of whom I am speaking would not have a consistent or even a stable system of conceived values the valuing process within him would lead to emerging value directions which would be constant across cultures and across time."<sup>2</sup>

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2. *Freedom to Learn*, Carl Rogers E. Merril Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio A Bell and Howel Company, 1969, page 254..

What is the meaning of 'prizing individuals as persons'? Negatively put, it means not trying to control or dominate another person's thoughts, feelings and actions and even abstaining from judging him approvingly or disapprovingly. Positively put, it means appreciating the ways in which the person views himself and the world around him and the ways in which the person chooses to cope with his life-situations. Prizing individuals is to accept the persons as they are, unconditionally, not demanding that they change according to one's own standards. This relationship is a warm, personal, committed relationship. It means standing by the other person, whatever he thinks or does. In certain ways it means that the other person is able to find in us an *alter ego*. Regarding the prizing of individuals as persons Rogers writes: 'So often, even with our children, we love them to control them rather than loving them because we appreciate them. I have come to think that one of the most satisfying experiences I know - and also one of the most growth-promoting experiences for the other person - is just fully to appreciate this individual in the same way that I appreciate a sunset. People are just as wonderful as sunsets if I can let them be. In fact, perhaps, the reason we can truly appreciate a sunset is that we cannot control it. When I look at a sunset as I did the other evening, I don't find myself saying, 'So often the orange a little on the right corner, and put a bit more purple along the base, and use a little more pink in the cloud colour.' I don't do that. I don't try to control a sunset. I watch it with awe as it unfolds. I like myself best when I can experience my staff member, my son, my daughter, my grandchildren, in this same way, appreciating the unfolding of a life.'<sup>3</sup>

In the passage quoted above, one may find Rogers's expressions resembling that of some poets. We have our own doubts about people. Are people 'just as wonderful as sunsets'?

Rogers's contention is not that our world is packed with saints. He concedes that there are unimaginable cruelty, envy, jealousy and avarice. But these phenomena do not spring from what is basic to man. At the deeper levels of human personality, even of the most distorted, most abnormal and sick people, there

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3. *Ibid*, page 235.

are positive drives; there is often a heroic struggle to live, and to let live, to enhance life, and to create conditions and opportunities for all to have life more abundantly. Rogers writes: "There is one deep learning which is perhaps basic to all of the things I have said thus far. It has been forced upon me by more than twenty-five years of trying to be helpful to individuals in personal distress. It is simply this. It has been my experience that persons have a basically positive direction. In my deepest contacts with individuals in therapy, even those whose troubles are most disturbing, whose behaviour has been most anti-social, whose feelings seem most abnormal, I find this to be true. When I can sensitively understand the feelings which they are expressing, when I am able to accept them as separate persons in their own right, then I find that they tend to move in certain directions. And what are these directions in which they tend to move? The words which I believe are most truly descriptive are words such as positive, constructive, moving toward self-actualization, growing toward maturity, growing toward socialization. I have come to feel that the more fully the individual is understood and accepted, the more he tends to drop the false fronts with which he has been meeting life, and the more he tends to move in a direction which is forward."<sup>4</sup>

One of the reasons why we fail to realize the basic goodness of our opponents, and possibly one of the reasons why we are able to hate people, is that we indulge in judging and evaluating persons morally, diagnostically and in other ways. By doing this we deny the very core of human personality. A person's behaviour will make sense to us if we are honoured by that person to share in his outlook on the world he lives in, largely a construct of his mind, which is a process rather than something static. As things are, the appropriateness, the honesty and the morality, meaning and significance of an action can be judged only by the person who is acting. Each person is unique. Each person is to some extent incomprehensible to others. Judging others at these deeper levels is to intrude foolishly into fields where we are doomed to fail. Rogers's ideas on this innermost reality of the human person is clear when he writes: "... I have

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4. *On Becoming a Person*, page 26.



come to feel that only one person (at least in my life time, and perhaps ever) can know whether what I am doing is honest, thorough, open, and sound, or false and defensive and unsound, and I am that person. I am happy to get all sorts of evidence regarding what I am doing and criticism (both friendly and hostile) and praise (both sincere and fawning) are a part of such evidence. But to weigh this evidence and to determine its meaning and usefulness is a task I cannot relinquish to anyone else.”<sup>5</sup>

A successful educator, or a successful therapist, or for that matter, any person who is able to enter into a fully satisfying and mutually beneficial relationship with another, may testify to the truth of what Rogers says, from his own analogous experiences; “As therapy goes on, the therapist’s feeling of acceptance and respect for the client tends to change to something approaching awe as he sees the valiant and deep struggle of the person to be himself. There is, I think, within the therapist, profound experience of the underlying commonality—should we say brotherhood—of man. As a result he feels toward the client a warm, positive, affectional reaction.”<sup>6</sup>

Rogers’s readers cannot miss the point that he drives home page after page. Human persons blossom in freedom. When we extend to other people our unconditional love, our love springing from sheer benevolence, they begin to unfold themselves into unique, wonderful, lovable beings, blessed with creativity, resourcefulness and artistic sense. We in turn are enriched and experience growth, when providing this type of selfless love for others. It would seem that one’s destiny is inextricably cast with that of one’s brothers, one’s fellow-human beings.

Bertrand Russell, who was a professed agnostic, had ideas similar to Rogers’s regarding human freedom and the respect due to persons. In his own unique way he pleaded strongly for the safeguard of human freedom, and for the unequivocal and unconditional respect for an individual’s convictions. He wrote: “The great artists, the great thinkers, and the great religious

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5. *Ibid*, page 23.

6. *Ibid*, page 82.

teachers of the world have had quite other standards; they have valued the individual, they have praised spontaneous impulse, they have conceived the good life as one lived from within, not forced into conformity to an external mechanism. They have not sought to make men convenient material for the manipulations of rulers, but to make them spiritually free to pursue what they believed to be good, regardless of law and public opinion. This was the teaching of Christ, of Buddha, of Lao-Tze; in another form the same emphasis on the individual is to be found in Shakespeare and in Galileo's resistance to the Inquisition. All that is best in human life depends upon a certain kind of self-respect, self-determination; a man who has allowed outside pressure to dictate the ends for which he shall live can never be more than a slave."<sup>7</sup>

These insights into human personality have been of great use not only in the psychotherapeutic clinic, but also in the field of education. By giving unlimited freedom to students, education, school life and college life, can be transformed into a most pleasant experience. It would be the experience of their making new and significant discoveries for themselves of fully living their lives, instead of their merely turning school life into a means of securing success and presumably happiness in adult life.

Our present system of education errs mainly by way of denying freedom to the young. We have left no option to them to choose what they wish to learn. By our examination systems we have taken away their freedom to set their own pace of learning. By our tests and in other subtle ways we also deny them freedom to set up their own values. The result is all too tragic. Rogers's own words are memorable: "When we put together in one scheme such elements as a prescribed curriculum, similar assignments for all students, lecturing as almost the only mode

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7. *Prospects of Industrial Civilization* by Bertrand Russell in collaboration with Dora Russel London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, W. C. 1, First published in 1923. Printed in Great Britain by Unwin Brothers Limited, The Gresham Press, London and Woking, page 259 ff.

of instruction, standard tests by which all students are externally evaluated, and instructor-chosen grades as the measure of learning, then we can almost guarantee that meaningful learning will be at an absolute minimum."<sup>8</sup>

Bertrand Russell had even stronger fears than Rogers when he contemplated the educational system. It may be sadly noted that the system remains pretty much unchanged to this day. Russell wrote: "Our modern education is mainly designed to produce convenient citizens, and therefore, dare not encourage spontaneity, since all spontaneity interferes with system. There is a tendency to uniformity, to the suppression of private judgment, to the production of populations which are tame towards their rulers and ferocious towards 'the enemy'. Even if our civilization escapes destruction in great wars, this tendency of state education to produce mental slavery will, if it is not checked, kill everything of value in the way of art and thought, and even ultimately of human affection, and it inevitably kills the joy of life which cannot exist where spontaneity is dead."<sup>9</sup>

A few educators adopted Rogers's simple ideas of respecting the freedom of their students and allowing them to fix their own goals for learning, encouraging them to think for themselves and to create, and giving them responsibility to determine their own lives and affairs. The result was that not only the students had a thrilling experience, but that the teachers themselves began to find their profession giving them a homely feeling, a sense of fulfilment and growth, in place of the nerve-racking experience it used to be, before they adopted the permissive attitude.<sup>10</sup>

In their heart of hearts, many teachers today would like to give more freedom to their students than they presently have. Some of the teachers may wish to know how to go about it. Probably Rogers's first experience of self-directed learning was at the Union Theological Seminary. He and a group of his fellow-students at the Seminary requested the authorities of the

8. *Freedom to Learn*, page 5.

9. *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*, page 259 ff.

10. *Freedom to Learn*, page 24 ff.

institution to allow them to take one subject for credit, without any direction from any teacher. The authorities agreed to this strange proposal, but stipulated that one junior faculty-member would sit in on the discussions without taking active part in them, unless the students themselves requested him to speak. This course turned out to be one of the most exciting experience of the participants. Instead of reading the books someone else thought important, they were able to seek help where and when they wanted it. In place of the questions which interested the professor, they were able to raise and answer, to their satisfaction, the questions that interested them. Instead of acquiring encyclopaedic knowledge on a subject which would have little relevance to their lives other than passing an examination, they were able to get knowledge that would make an entire difference to the future. In fact, in this particular case, the majority of the participants of the course left the Seminary helped on by it. The satisfaction they derived came from being fully themselves. For the first time probably, they had the opportunity of exercising their freedom in a responsible way, without very many of the usual curbs.

Later on, as a teacher, Rogers tried to give the same kind of freedom to his students, and discovered that while all the students would in the long run prefer and cherish this way of learning to conventional methods, the new one evokes hostile feelings towards the teacher at the initial stage. The newness of the method, and the heavy responsibility placed on the students, and the sudden stop to being spoon-fed by the teacher, stirred up feelings of insecurity in many. They turned hostile to the teacher who had precipitated the crisis. This reaction and a method of overcoming the difficulty is clear in the following passage: "Actually, ten or fifteen years ago, I probably would have given the group even more freedom, presenting them with the opportunity (and need) of constructing the whole course. I have learned that this arouses a great deal of anxiety, and a great deal of frustration and anger directed toward me. ('We came to learn from you!' 'You're paid to be our teacher!' 'We can't plan the course. We don't know the field.' I am not sure that this resentment is necessary. Consequently, whether out of cowardice or



wisdom, I have come to provide enough limits and requirements, which can be perceived as structure so that students can comfortably start to work. It is only as the course progresses that they realize that each 'requirement' separately, and all of them together, are simply different ways of saying, 'Do exactly what you wish to do in this course, and say and write exactly what you think and feel.' But freedom seems less frustrating and anxiety-laden, when it is presented in somewhat conventional sounding terms as a series of 'requirements'. On the other hand, if I were to have this same group of individuals in another course, I am sure none would be frightened if I simply started out by saying, 'Now we're here. What is that we would like to do which would enrich our personal and intellectual learning?'<sup>11</sup>

In industrial management too, Rogers's ideas are likely to have far-reaching consequences. Even today, to a large extent managerial techniques fail to treat workers as persons. They are paid to do what they are told. Executives are paid to tell the workers what is to be done. The presumption is that the workers are unable, or cannot be depended on, to improve production and reduce costs of production. Basing themselves upon these gratuitous presumptions the management tries its best to control the worker as much as possible and make him a machine to carry out orders.

As soon as men are considered and treated like machines, there creeps in the feeling that they are not important. After all, parts of machines and whole machines may be easily replaced, if you have the capital to invest. However, experience forces even the most traditional-minded managers to concede that it is necessary for the workers to have a sense of importance, a sense of belonging to a team, an attitude that the factory is in a true sense theirs, if the concern is to succeed in making profits. The traditional-minded manager, failing to treat the workers as persons cannot have a genuine feeling of importance among them. He, therefore, tries to create it artificially. The hollowness of his attempts is transparent to the workers and adds to their feelings of depersonalization, and psychological degradation and drudgery.

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11. *Ibid*, page 72 ff.

In the absence of respect and trust for each other, the workers are quick to devise ingenious ways to defeat the aims of managers. Orders may be too literally carried out. Even incentive schemes fail at times to boost production owing to the fear of the workers that the management will find ways to exploit them once it comes to know that they can produce more.

As opposed to the traditional way of dealing with workers, we can think of treating them as persons. They can be given freedom to experiment with their ideas and fully participate in decision-making processes, realizing that the process, and the benefits even in terms of profits, concern them as well as their managers. This is exactly the direction in which some enlightened industrialists are beginning to move. The results are as they expected. Under this type of management, companies which were running at a loss, began to net considerable profits. The psychological satisfaction of workers, foremen and staff improved. Workers found no difficulty in taking pains to implement the decisions they made in partnership with the management. Amazingly, in some factories where the workers had previously resisted any introduction of advanced technology, under the traditional management, the new concept of management was able to motivate them to clamour for technological innovations, and even to suggest themselves improvements on the machines in use.<sup>12</sup> As conflicts arose, ways were also found to resolve them thanks to the concern of all for each other and the sense of participation. Speaking of this new type of management and leadership, it has been observed that "its essence is that it makes effective use of human resources through participation; it is 'employee-oriented'; it encourages responsible behaviour and tough-minded self-control rather than reliance on external authority."<sup>13</sup>

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12. *Technology, Industry and Man. The Age of Acceleration* Charles R Walker Ed., Yale University Assisted by Adelaide G. Walker; *A Revision of Modern Technology and Civilization*, McGraw-Hill Book Company New York 1968 by McGraw-Hill. Printed in the USA. page 109 ff.

13. *Technology Industry and Man.* page 109.

To sum up the main ideas: valuable insights into human freedom, human personality and the climate suitable for its growth, have been gained by Carl Rogers, Bertrand Russell and others, though they have lost faith in today's organized forms of religions. Application of their ideas in the fields of education and industry, so far in a limited way, has been successful and gives us hope to revolutionize our educational and economic systems and humanize our world a little more. Their positive contributions invite religious leaders and thinkers to update religious practices and make it possible for believers to experience the 'freedom of the children of God' in all spheres of life.

Rosary High School  
Baroda

Mathew Kalathil

# Freedom is Life

If you were to read it purely for the story, you would probably want to hang yourself, - it's all rambling talk and random incident. But read it for what it is worth: the unfolding of a life lived with zest and enthusiasm; the impact of one dynamic, earthy personality on a friend; a call to man to look for authentic experience in religion and life; and insight into the basic concerns of humanity today, and *Zorba the Greek* will speak to your heart, overpower your sensibilities and challenge you to creative thinking.

Who is Zorba? Nikos Kazantzakis, his creator, calls him "a living heart, a large voracious mouth, a great brute soul, not yet severed from mother earth." He is Everyman turned Greek, a modern Sancho Panza who opens his master's eyes to the realities of life, a Shavian Life-Force poured into a long, lean, fierce-moustached Greek whose sixty-five years have neither dimmed his lust for life nor dulled his ever-questing spirit.

He lives for a few eventful months with the 'I' of the story as foreman, cook, friend, and companion, and the boss's life is no more the same.

In "Zorba", Kazantzakis attempts to discover the mode of life which permits the human spirit to be most unfettered. The insistence is on the "unfettered freedom" of Zorba. The 'boss' of the story experiences life as a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between reality and the intellect. He has what he himself calls "a wretched inhuman way to transpose reality, removing blood, flesh and bones and reducing it to the abstract, linking it with universal laws." He cannot accept his humanity, his weakness, his tendency to sin. Kazantzakis is implicitly contesting the conviction latent in early Hellenistic thought that man's body was evil, his real being was his spirit; a dualism between spirit and matter, call it Manichean, call it Puritan, which still has its strangle-hold over so many religious people



including christians. With this is contrasted Zorba's healthy, concrete approach to life. The way his body and soul were kneaded from the same material, formed one harmonious whole. Zorba laughs at the idea that what gives pleasure is of the devil: "pretty women, spring, roast-suckling, wine - the devil made them all! God made monks, fasting, camomile tea and ugly women... Pooh!" His feet are firmly planted on the ground by the weight of his great body. He is an eternal reproof to the boss who thinks with his brain.

The main narrative line is projected through Zorba. He communicates a power. He projects himself fiercely and desperately from the very centre of his passionate experience. The food he eats turns into music, good humour, dancing, wrangling even; "and that's Resurrection", he comments. What comes to fullest realization in him is life, a triumphant pulsation. He is a kind of pagan principle of life made manifest in the flesh. His brain functions with confidence and daring. His soul, wherever you touch it, strikes out fire. And he communicates this power and experience to others. To relate to him in whatever measure is to experience an urge to fulness of life.

The 'boss' of the story is a sort of psychic shadow background, against which Zorba stands out in gigantic proportions. Because of his intimate relationship with Zorba, he goes through a process of discovering and liberating himself. The world becomes a better and a richer place, the flesh becomes, not just a demon to be resisted, but a positive good. "You're on a long piece of string, boss... and think you're free. You need a touch of folly to cut that... but you're such a strong head. The head's a careful little housekeeper." The writing of the 'Buddha' by the boss is a work of exorcism. Buddha is the "pure" soul which has emptied itself of body, spirit, heart. The boss feels he should "lay siege to him and drive him out of my entrails." He must catch him and free himself. It was a life-and-death struggle against, as he says, "a tremendous force of destruction... a great NO which was consuming my heart and on the result depended the salvation of my soul."

There is a complementary aspect to the vision of the two protagonists. What one gropes for in his mind and therefore

realizes less vigorously, the other experiences and lives in his body. They dream of living the life of the entire universe: "Everything, men, animals, trees, stars, we are all one substance, involved in the same terrible struggle." Creation groans in that struggle. What struggle? "Turning matter into spirit",... striving towards the Omega point, Chardin would have said.

As a child, the boss had nearly let himself fall into a well, expecting to find a marvellous city there. As he grew up, he nearly fell into the word "eternity", and into quite a number of other words too: "love", "hope", "country", "god". As each word was conquered and left behind, he had the feeling that he had made some progress. "But no, I was only changing words and calling it deliverance." And now, in the last phase, he has been hanging over the edge of the word "Buddha."

It is Zorba who initiates him into freedom. "You understand with your brain. You say, this is right and that's wrong: this is true and that isn't." But your body is silent, as if it hadn't a drop of blood within it." Zorba understands with his blood. He kills a man in the course of a guerilla war and is overcome with grief, when he meets the orphaned, beggared children. He gives them all he has and flees. "And I am still running", he tells us. There was a time when he thought a man was a Turk, a Bulgar, or a Greek. "Nowadays I say, this man is a good fellow, that one's a bastard. They can be Greeks or Bulgars or Turks... And as I grow older, I feel I shan't even go on asking that. Whether a man is good or bad. There he is, poor devil, I think, he also eats and drinks and makes love and is frightened, whoever he is: he has his god and his devil just the same, and he'll peg out and lie as stiff as a board beneath the ground. We're all brothers." It is thus Zorba is "rescued" from chauvinistic patriotism, from priests, from money, from all narrow prejudices and from the pettiness of life and condemnatory ethics. "I find my own deliverance, I become a man." He goes to the inner humanness of all. From him the boss learns "to fill my soul with flesh... My flesh with soul."

After the debacle of the cable and pylons and the complete ruin of their plans, the two friends react in a strange way. They eat, drink and laugh at the pettiness of life. Paper and ink,

goods and profits, mines and workmen and monasteries are forgotten in the ecstasy of that movement. Zorba dancing looked like "an old archangel in rebellion." The boss experiences a "sublime, absurd and unjustifiable gladness... a sense of deliverance." The future is full of promise for him as he dances on the beach with Zorba. "That's the road to take; find the absolute rhythm and follow it with absolute trust."

What the character of Zorba suggests in the fictional sphere, Jesus is in real life. As Samuel Rayan says, no man can relate to Jesus in faith "without experiencing him as an urge to newness in life, newness in thinking, acting and relating to one's fellowmen." Through Zorba, Kazantzakis suggests a way of living that is reminiscent of the freedom envisaged by the Sermon on the Mount: live each moment to its utmost; love the unlovable; do more than you need, out of sheer love and joy; shake off what cripples and be spontaneous and free. Man feels the urge for this freedom. Christ brought it to earth. But it has since been shackled under many a man-made chain of convention and indifference; under stereotyped patterns of thought and behaviour.

Between his two protagonists, Kazantzakis succeeds in giving us a number of refreshing, unshackling insights into a lot of issues that interest modern man with his urge to freedom and his bias for the existential. Faith is an active thing that involves man's whole life and being, and is not simply a passive state of mind. Zorba becomes what he believes; a principle of vitality and dynamism, an appetite that throws itself into work and pleasure and speculation with a zest that is ever new. What happened yesterday, what is going to happen tomorrow, has no power over him. "I say, 'What are you doing at this moment, Zorba? 'I am sleeping'. 'Well, sleep well'... 'I'm working'. 'Work well'... 'I'm kissing a woman! 'Well, kiss her well, Zorba' and forget all the rest while you're at it.'" Is this what theologians call, living the Sacrament of the Moment? to be free of the past and the future? free to live in the permanent 'Now' of time?

Zorba will not be a party to the world's injustice. He challenges a whole village, single-handed, in defence of a weak, sensual woman. He challenges God himself with Promethean

audacity: "If he's really and truly a God, he'll be ashamed." Before we condemn him, we should remember Job was more pleasing to God than his smug, facilely satisfied friends. On whose side are we, with the good people of the village, church-goers and all, who yelp, "Kill her, kill her!" while she screams for compassion in Christ's name, or with the realist who would save her? We may dub him a rake, but as his relationship with old Bouboulina shows, at the core of it all, is a christian compassion. She is an old rag of a French cabaret singer whom no one would look at twice, "What an old rake! Hasn't he any eyes to see or nose to smell with?" "...yes, you flint-hearted gossips...but I've got a heart too." Zorba stands for a healthy freedom from Puritanical repressions, which in Kazantzakis' opinion frees rather than imprisons the individual.

By his creation of Zorba, Kazantzakis is suggesting that man and his world can be different, greater, than they are now. Breaking through the traditional and fighting fear-complexes, he is pointing to the possibility of a richer life. Man in search of happiness seems to take refuge in order and security. Everything must follow the beaten track, the sacrosanct routine, the safe and simple rules. Inside this enclosure, his petty certainties go unchallenged. The creative urge that is Zorba is unconventional and imaginative. "Woe to him who has not within himself the source of happiness!" Kazantzakis seems to suggest that there is eternity even in our ephemeral lives, and that happiness is available when the world is ready for it. "How simple and frugal a thing is happiness: a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea!" And friends to share this with. Nothing else. And all that is required to feel that here and now is happiness is a simple, frugal heart. Like a child, Zorba sees everything for the first time. He is forever astonished. Spring overpowers his senses. "who was the artist who did it? It's the first time I've seen it, boss...that miracle, over there." He looks each day at events and objects with an eye that has not been dulled by familiarity. Artists are like that. They do not really see the new world; they create it. "Men like me ought to live a thousand years," he claims. He throws himself headlong into everything...wine, work, love. The world's in a mess because things are done by halves. "God hates a half-devil ten times more than an arch-devil."



When the boss finally finds deliverance from his two eternal antagonisms, he exults in ecstasy, "at the miracle of this life"; at the way the world is "perfectly adapted to our feet and hands and bellies." He completes his Buddha manuscript. It marks the completion of his journey from renunciation to acceptance of life. He has finished his service to Buddha and gone beyond it. Renunciation, or pleasure too, for that matter, is only a means, a means to harmony with onself.

Nikos Kazantzakis has deliberately chosen what is most uncompromising: to fight a distorted and unchristian approach to asceticism and to life. Zorba is starkly realistic. He is governed by experience rather than rules: "I just felt cherries were doing what they liked with me, and it was ludicrous. So I stuffed myself with cherries till I was sick... I was saved. I could say to any cherry: I don't need you any more... I did the same thing later with wine and tobacco... That's how men free themselves not by turning ascetic."

Kazantzakis has a moral vision that is repelled by the callousness of systems, abstractions and codes of behaviour. He is concerned with human relationships, with the possibilities of growth and fulfilment of life. In doing so, he comes very close to the Gospel principle. The boss is thinking of the sage who tried to teach his disciples to do voluntarily what the law commanded, to say 'Yes' to necessity, and change the inevitable to something done of one's own free will. He concludes that this is "the only human way to deliverance. A pitiable way, but there is no other." He is trying to speak the language of Jesus, who surely goes one better: not only to give your coat to the one who grabs your shirt, but to love him while he is grabbing it.

But what of revolt? The reaction of man to say "No" to necessity? To conquer necessity and create a new world, purer, better, freer than the one we now have? Before this can be done, religion itself needs to be liberated into more of a prophecy and a protest. It is this Jesus came to do, and is in process of achieving through his friends. Man and his well-being need to be accepted as more important than laws and structures. Without the creative *élan* religion can degenerate into a dead shell unrelated to the life of man. Watching the long file of monks with their heads bowed, the boss reflects on the pity that "such aus-

terity should be without a soul," and observes that, even in decay, "an elevated rhythm in life preserves all its outward form. The spirit departs, but it leaves its vast dwelling which it has slowly evolved." Whether we call it life or spirit, Truth or Reality, there is something essential in Zorba, which refuses to be contained in the ill-fitting vestments of a lack-lustre society.

God is reborn only in those who question him, and dies within those who acquiesce unquestioningly and passively in his supremacy. He can be closer to those who deny than to those who conform, to those who apparently despair than to those who are satisfied. Kazantzakis avoids the easy solution that the believers will be saved and the unbelievers damned: "This people worships me with their lips." He follows Christ in turning stereotyped answers inside out. Churches may demand conformity of behaviour and belief, but God operates inexplicably. At the back of Kazantzakis' mind is the intuition that where the Mystery that is God is concerned, the highest point that man can attain is not "knowledge or virtue or goodness or victory, but something more heroic and more despairing: Sacred Awe."

The boss remembers a desire of his childhood. "We'll build a monastery of our own, without a god, without a devil, but with free men." Many of us regard God as a convenience for our own ends; a kind of 'universal bell-hop'. Today secularized man feels that we should not need God for our biological-physical scientific life, or as a substitute. We need God in the way of freedom and choice and love; not by way of necessity or constraint. You will say, Zorba mocks God and blasphemes; but it is surely not God he blasphemes so much as the false notion of God that prevails: the God who is better 'dead', so we will search for the True One.

In *Zorba the Greek*, mention is made of an intellectual community of friends, who work all day and meet at night to "discuss the great problems of humanity", to rethink traditional answers, and to provide the dynamism and challenge which keeps us ever on the move. Kazantzakis does not claim to give us the right solutions; he cannot and he should not in a novel which is aesthetically an "impression", not an argument. But he has done what Jesus did in his parables: he has taken living ideas, clothed them with flesh and blood, and made them into a story, the story of *Zorba the Greek*.

# 'The Pilgrimage of Freedom

From a certain point of view it can be said that man is condemned to freedom. Freedom creates innumerable problems in the world of persons. It causes inevitable confrontations that set man against man, the son against the father, brother against the father, brother against brother and a younger generation against an elder one. But freedom is at the root of human dignity; it is the source of man's spontaneity and creativity, the possibility of his love. Without freedom man is not man, and without the creativity of his free decisions the world would be at the mercy of chance occurrences and hence without any consistent meaning and purpose.

The growth of man consists in the maturing of his freedom. The maturity of freedom enhances man's creativity and enlarges his heart for selfless love. Man's fall is the outcome of his immature freedom and his redemption consists in the liberation of this freedom into creative maturity; the history of salvation is freedom's pilgrimage to maturity; and the Church which is the sacrament of salvation should naturally be the home of redeeming freedom. But the concrete experience on many levels through centuries is that even in the church freedom is in struggle.

The following is an attempt to trace the confrontations of freedom with non-freedom, of maturity with immaturity, starting from Jesus and continuing throughout the history of the new People of God down to our own century. Needless to say in this attempt we can only pick out a few instances at random and bring them to some focus so that the implications become easily visible.

## **Mercy, not sacrifice**

Jesus, the man from Nazareth (Acts 2:22), had a new grasp of God and a new way of looking at religion. He thought and acted differently and was upholding a new set of values of life.

He gave his followers a new commandment and wanted people to listen to him and to know the truth and be free. For Jesus, God was not an impersonal Monad who is far away from the people or a provident God who is 'near'. Jesus' experience of God reached such depths as to grasp him as Father, Son and Spirit who is in the *midst* of his people. And so Jesus understood God as the mystery of self-emptying love, and His freedom as the absolute possibility of this love. According to Jesus the two important commandments do not any longer remain separate but merge into one: Love one another as I have loved you (Jn. 13:34); if God so loved us we also ought to love one another (1 Jn. 4:11). A God who is in the *midst* of his people really enhances human dignity and liberates man from the tyranny of a God-out-there who would exploit man and wring his life-blood out of him. Jesus' experience of God as self-less love and perfect communion sets his mind free from the age-old conceptions about God prevalent in his time. The freedom that was born in Jesus' mind with regard to God is reflected also in his relationship with Him. An expression of it may be found in the fact that Jesus gave more importance to mercy than to sacrifice, more consideration to man's well being than to the Sabbath law. Showing mercy is a more liberating experience for many than offering sacrifices. That is why he told his disciples to give priority to reconciliation over the offering of gifts on the altar (Mt. 5:23-24). They were advised not to bypass an occasion to do good and to be helpful, although it was a Sabbath day on which, according to tradition, work was forbidden. Moreover, the new freedom reached by Jesus set him against the traditions perpetuated by man against God's law (Mk. 7:13). His irrevocable and definite stand was that man should cling to God's will understood here and now in the sanctuary of his freedom even against the established traditions.

### Led by the Spirit

And so Jesus was led by the Spirit (Mk. 1:12). In him the Spirit had emerged into the full freedom of action, and because of the new life of the Spirit which was in him, he was discharged from the law (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 5:18). Jesus was perfectly at ease to be a servant in Love (Gal. 5:14; Lk. 22:27). The freedom that was in Jesus enabled him to know God's will for him and receive



instructions directly, independent of any person or structure. If he had not been led by the Spirit, if he had not attained that maturity of freedom to listen to his Father directly, and if he had looked to traditions and the Law to know God's will, he would have turned out to be a rabbi of position, teaching and exhorting people to observe the Sabbath perfectly, and to tithe mint and dill and cummin without much caring for weightier matters, such as justice, mercy and faith (Mt. 23:23). But the Spirit of freedom that was awakened in him through deep contact with God created a new personality out of him, with new perspectives in thought, new criteria of evaluation and new patterns of behaviour so much so that he came into conflict with the powers that were, and was judged a sinner by experts of the Law (Jn. 9:24).

What we have to note here is that freedom according to Jesus is quite different from that of the moral philosopher. For the latter human freedom is the possibility of choice between good and evil, between two limited aspects of goodness, whereas for Jesus it was the freedom which follows a fundamental choice and irrevocable commitment made by man. It was the redeemed and mature freedom given by the Spirit to be alive and creative, and to be fully at service. It was what Paul defends in his Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, and consists in our fellowship of Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:20), and our power to be servants to one another in Love (Gal. 5:13).

The Christian experience of freedom in its fullness is that the love of Christ leaves man no choice (2 Cor. 5:14). Freedom of choice only shows that freedom is still immature. It is a negative freedom, the freedom of a vacuum, whereas the freedom of the Spirit is freedom come of age, the freedom of the fullness. To be free in the vacuum may spell disintegration for man, and the agony of choice in emptiness may be condemnation, but freedom in the Spirit is redeeming pressure exerted on the heart to love much and love creatively.

This distinctive nature of Christian freedom, that it is not a freedom of choice, but the redeemed and mature freedom of the Spirit consequent on man's fundamental choice to belong to

Christ, is often insufficiently considered in discussions on freedom in the Church today.

### **Freedom of truth**

Another characteristics note of Christian freedom understood as creativity springing from abundance, is that it has its basis in truth. It is truth that sets man free in the kingdom of Christ; and the Spirit of freedom is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 16: 13; 15:26). Jesus was supremely free because in him there was the fulness of grace and truth, the grace of truthfulness (Jn. 1:14). The Law was given through Moses, and that tutor imprisoned men under its custody (Gal. 3: 23), bringing upon them the curse of legalism (Gal. 3:10), but grace and truth came through Jesus to set free those who were under the Law in order that they might attain the status of sons (Gal. 4:5) and of friends (Jn. 15:15). And Jesus in whom there is no falsehood (Jn. 7:18), and who is the "Yes" pronounced upon all God's promises, (2Cor. 1:19) is the Way, the Truth and the Life: the Way of Truth into the Life of Freedom (Jn. 14:6). Jesus' prayer that his disciples should be sanctified in Truth (Jn. 17:17) expresses his intimate desire that they grow up into the fullness of redeemed freedom based on truth. Christian holiness is not therefore the passivity of conformity that wears long garments and cleanses the outside of the cup and the plate, leaving the inside full of extortion and rapacity (Mt. 23:25), but it is the freedom of dynamic truth that turns the inside out and breaks the ranks of the pseudo-freedom of untruth. In the history of Israel there was the struggle for the freedom of untainted truth against the domination of falsehood and half truths. This is actually the substance of the struggle of the prophets against the established customs and beliefs; and Christ in whom the prophecy of Israel was fulfilled (Hebr. 1:1) brought this confrontation to its climax. So men tried to put an end to him, hoping thus to extinguish the freedom of Truth, but he was raised to life by the Father. Down through the history of Christianity this struggle for the freedom of truth has continued and it is very active even today as we shall see successively in random instances.

## Obey God rather than men

Jesus spread around him the fire and power of his own freedom. The apostles, his closest associates, were drawn into them too when they experienced the resurrection of Jesus in themselves. As a result, they also were enabled, like Jesus, to receive instruction and guidance directly from God and to discern his will even against the official organs that professed to manifest it unmistakably. Peter and John, these untrained lay men (Acts 4:13 N. E. B), stood in front of Jewish rulers, elders and doctors of the Law, asking them "Is it right in God's eyes for us to obey you rather than God?" (Acts 4: 19). These men had forbidden the apostles to speak and to teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). But the freedom of the Spirit at work in the apostles could not be stifled, not even within prison-walls (Acts 5:20) and with any method of torture.

The apostles were brought before the Jewish rulers a second time on the same charges. Now their answer was an unwavering affirmation: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Here the freedom of the Spirit, based as it is on the truth of God, puts forth such resistance that the powers are left disarmed and crippled in face of it.

## Paul resists Peter

The concern for the freedom which the truth of the Gospel brings inspires Paul to rebuke even Peter at Antioch. The issue involved was the Jewish dietary laws. The Antiochian Church was that of Jews and Gentiles and the gospel was planted there, the gospel that there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female, for all are one person in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:28). The Jews for whom to eat with a Gentile was unthinkable were being educated into the freedom of the Gospel to share the common meal. But the opposition on the part of the Jews persisted, and though the question of circumcision was already settled in principle the attitude was slow to change. Peter comes to Antioch and forgetting the old taboos, shares the common meal with the Jews and Gentiles alike. Then came some of the Jewish party from Jerusalem and Peter is

coward enough to withdraw from the common meal. With him others too withdrew, giving the impression that only the Jewish Christians still observing the Levitical dietary laws were the real Christians. This untruth had to be resisted and Paul did it on the spot and in public. He opposed Peter to his face and re-established the truth of the Gospel which is the "freedom we have in Jesus" (Gal. 2:4-6). Already here we find the confrontation between freedom and unfreedom, truth and untruth, maturity and immaturity within the Christian fold itself. But it was the springtime of Freedom in the Church, and brotherly correction was still possible at all levels.

### **The martyrs versus the Powers**

The torch of Christian freedom was kept very much alight in the age of the martyrs. They offered their lives to safeguard the truth of the gospel and the freedom they had attained in Christ. How gladly did Christians and leaders of the Church like Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna face persecution! Their words in the hour of suffering were an unambiguous witness to their inner freedom. Ignatius considered himself the rough wheat of God, and longed to be ground in the lion's jaws to become the pure, white bread of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Even slave girls of no erudition, like Blandina became a revelation of the power of the Spirit.

The concern for truth, the conviction of faith and the resulting inner freedom were alive throughout the age of the martyrs. Persecutions could not extinguish the Christian spirit nor hold it captive: they only helped Christian freedom to flourish and burst into power.

The Christians were persecuted mainly because they kept their freedom and obstinately refused to conform to the established religion of the Roman Empire. They refused to worship the deified emperor. In respecting Caesar they gave him his due, but they feared only the Lord. Because of the influence of

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1. Daniel-Rops, Henri, *The Church of Apostles and Martyrs*, (A Doubleday Image book, Garden City, New York, 1962), Vol. I, pp. 231-2.



Christians "the people were deserting the temples, the official cult was being neglected and the trade in sacrificial animals had been affected."<sup>2</sup> Men found freedom from exploitation in religion. This disturbed the established social order and caused its supporters considerable anxiety. The only crime of the Christians was the freedom they appropriated "to meet together before day-break, to sing psalms to the glory of Christ, to swear never to steal, murder or commit adultery and to eat a common meal together."<sup>3</sup>

Paul saved Christian freedom from the Jewish religion. The martyrs gave their blood to keep alive the purity of this freedom from the contamination of organization and officialdom of the Roman religions.

## II

### The Constantinian captivity

The era of the Emperor Constantine marked the end of persecution of the Christians. This is often said to be the golden age of Christianity; it may have been so, regarding the externals. But, in fact, when Christianity was made the official religion and granted special privileges, its spirit was subdued and the whole of it was gradually led into captivity by the State.

This began more or less explicitly in 313 A. D., when Constantine and Licinius reached certain agreements regarding policy towards the Christians. Realizing their indomitable spirit they began to tolerate Christianity and make it an ally to achieve their ambitions of political reorganization.<sup>4</sup>

From that moment Christianity and the Church became identified with the Empire, and non-Christians were looked upon as political enemies;<sup>5</sup> the Emperors considered themselves Christ's

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2. Daniel-Rops, *op. cit.*, p. 224

3. *Ibid.*, p. 225

4. Baus, Karl. *From Apostolic Community to Constantine* (Handbook of Church History, Vol. I, London, 1965), p. 416.

5. Mirgler Albert, *Mutations of Western Christianity* (Compass Book, London, 1964), p. 34.

representatives, thus retaining the pagan practice of assuming the title of the divine.<sup>6</sup> They interfered freely with the affairs of the Church, created dioceses, raised ecclesiastical dignitaries, convoked ecumenical councils, presided over them and promulgated their decisions.<sup>7</sup> They gave a hierarchical structure to the Church modelled on the state-hierarchy. Bishops became the local administrators and servants of the Empire.<sup>8</sup> Emperors even undertook missionary activities in an imperial way.<sup>9</sup>

Christianity, the movement among the poor and the neglected of society, started by the suffering Servant of Yahweh, brought up by his fishermen disciples and spread through the slave world of the Roman Empire as an undergrowth of freedom, was now seduced and had to stand by the imperial throne. The privileges that were granted to the Church proved fetters on her hands and feet. Only when we compare the successive periods of the Church's history with her real spirit manifest till the fourth century do we realize how the all too ready protection of the State was an ordeal more formidable than hostility.

The following can be specially marked out as the lasting shadows cast on the face of the Church by its alliance with the State:

**1. Faith became ha'f hearted:** When Christianity became the State religion, everybody was compelled to join it, and naturally the ferment of faith and conviction disappeared considerably. Instead, political organization and official laws crept in, and this marked the death of Christian freedom.

**2. Authoritarianism set in:** Perhaps the most fundamental danger into which the Church had fallen was the authoritarianism that she contracted from the State. 'It shall not be so among you' (Mk. 10:42) was the instruction given by Jesus to his disciples unlike that of the rulers over the Gentiles who lorded

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6. Daniel-Rops, *The Church of Apostles and Martyrs*, Vol. I, p. 157.

7. Mirgler. *op. cit.*, p. 34.

. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

it over them. As a matter of fact, till the fourth century this policy was carried out; when Christianity was ruled by the Emperor, it could not but appropriate that authority which 'lords it over'. The State reduced the field of liberty to the minimum; so also did the Church.<sup>11</sup> The immediate consequence was apparent. She became an intolerant Church hunting down pagans and heretics.

**3. Straying from the Truth:** When faith was made subservient to privileges, authority was instituted in its place, and the concern for truth began to falter. As early as 324 A. D., we see Christian authors "straining themselves to the utmost" to justify the murder of Licinius, the brother-in-law of Constantine.<sup>11</sup> In dealing with the heretics also the Church had to stand with the State, and evidently the motivation of the State was not always a concern for truth.<sup>12</sup> The martyrs refused to accept the Emperor as divine, but Christians of the imperial Church did not refuse the ritual of genuflecting before him.<sup>13</sup>

**4. Possessions increased:** Another fetter fastened on the feet of the Church was perhaps the increase of her material possessions. The Lord wanted his Church to be free from this (Mt. 10: 9-11), and the Apostles were keen on not amassing wealth (Acts 3:6), and whatever they had, they shared among themselves (Acts 2:45), and they were quite free to attend the temple together, to break bread in their homes and partake of food with glad and generous heart (Acts 2:46).

**5. Persons did not matter:** What kept up the spirit of Christianity in the beginning was the intimate personal relations between those who belonged to Christ. This they learned from the Lord himself; this they accepted as his legacy in the New Commandment. It was the personal attraction, love, understanding and sympathy found in Jesus that held the disciples together around him. He called them friends (Jn. 15:15). The first Christians too were very cordially bound together as members of one body; they were of one heart and soul (Acts 4:32). Where personal relations are authentic, freedom is brought to fulfilment.

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10. Daniel-Rops, *The Church of Apostles and Martyrs*, Vol. II, p. 174.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

But when authoritarianism crept in, and when the Church began to control men by force as the State did, the power of belonging to each other began to dwindle, even as faith, and the concern for truth, languished in captivity.

**6. Christianity became strictly a religion:** In one sense, Christianity was a break away from the "religionness" of the Jews. Jesus was not much concerned about the religious practices and worship of the Jews. If Judaism was a religion, Christianity was not. Other concepts were needed to define this movement. The Jews offered sacrifices but the Christians shared a common meal. The Jews needed temples and the Holy of Holies for their sacrifices and prayer, but the Christians gathered in private houses (Acts 2:46). similarly if the pagans had their religions, the Christians were a 'religionless' people. Jesus was judged irreligious and the Christians were called atheists.

But when Christianity became the official religion of the State, it had really to become a *religion*, and take on most of what was left over by pagan religions when they were dismissed from the Empire.

In short, as a result of taking the place of the official religion of State, the "Gospel doctrine had suffered a number of blows. Christianity in the fourth century was no longer what it had been in early times, in those heroic days when there had been no middle way between total sacrifice and refusal."<sup>14</sup> And so the Constantinian turning-point was the beginning of a long captivity for Christianity. It is understandable that the dangers were not seen at that time,<sup>15</sup> and hence the traditions and the theological thinking and the style of life which were to develop within the Church from that time were influenced deeply by this situation; they grew up in non freedom and captivity. Any attempt to liberate the Christian spirit even in small measure has met with persecution down to our own day. What we are going to see next is some instances in which the Church which was the champion of truth and the home of freedom till the fourth century, became blind enough to seek to stifle the gospel

14. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

15. Baus, *op. cit.*, p. 431.



freedom and bypass the truth. We pass to the Middle Ages and come to the present age in which such confrontations have become acute and their influences consequential.

### **Aquinas condemned**

When Thomas Aquinas came to the forefront of Theology, Platonism was the orthodoxy of the day. Aquinas found Aristotle's philosophy helpful as a means to explain Christian doctrine and a frame in which to present it. He therefore undertook what may be called an Aristotelian revolution.

The new wave of Aristotelianism in Catholic thinking caused considerable alarm. It was looked upon as a dangerous novelty. Many bishops and Doctors feared that Thomas and his disciples might become good philosophers and bad Christians.<sup>16</sup> There were hard Platonists and Augustinians who stoutly denied that they were even good philosophers. They found it easy to play up resemblances between Thomism and Averroism. Anathema after anathema was thundered from high places.<sup>17</sup> But Aquinas, and Albert with him stood firm. One of his fanatical adversaries was Stephen Tempier the Bishop of Paris. Thomas, however, did not withdraw even a single proposition. After his death, Bishop Tempier drew up an anti-Thomas syllabus of 219 articles and pronounced condemnation on some of them.<sup>18</sup> An intellectual war broke out between the Augustinians and the Dominicans on the issue of Thomism. Finally Thomism emerged victorious, and thereafter for long had a monopoly of Catholic Theology. Had the original atmosphere of freedom continued in the Church, such condemnations would have been unthinkable. Men would have been welcome and trusted to express their faith responsibly in a variety of ways.

### **Joan the maid: religious experience versus religious organization**

On May 30, 1431, in the market square of Rouen the nineteen-year-old Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake. She met

16. Chesterton, G. K., *St Thomas Aquinas* (A Doubleday Image Book, Garden City, New York, 1954), p. 85.

17. *Ibid.* 18) *Ibid.*, p. 87.

with this fate because she was faithful to the orders she had received from God directly through listening to "voices."<sup>19</sup> She confessed openly that she had done nothing except what she was told to do by God.<sup>20</sup> Her commitment was to the Lord and she was willing to submit to the Church in as much as the Lord and the Church are one.<sup>21</sup> But before the official Church that was trying her and demanding that she disown her conscience, she took the attitude: God rather than this Church.<sup>22</sup>

In May, 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized by Pope Benedict XV and from then on we are left without a doubt that her trial was really a confrontation of personal religious experience with organizational religious authority and that there may arise occasions on which fidelity to the demands of the Spirit of God may create tragic situation of conflict with the official form of the Church, the thinking of which is moulded by the sense of the legalist rather than by the gospel of freedom.

### **Savonarola: the cry in the wilderness**

During the Lent of 1496 from the pulpit of a church in Florence rang out the clear affirmation that "no Christian is obliged to obey an order which infringes justice and charity."<sup>23</sup> The man who made it was Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican Friar, preoccupied with a desire for reformation of the Church. This cry of righteous indignation was heard at a time when the Church had sunk "to her lowest depths of degradation,"<sup>24</sup> with Alexander VI at her head. His pontificate was the "most deplorable in the whole of Christianity."<sup>25</sup>

Against this "abomination of desolation" on the throne of St Peter Savonarola raised his voice. The Pope was looking for an occasion to stifle it. In 1495, Savonarola was forbidden to preach, but the friar who believed it to be his special call to proclaim the ruinous state of the Church and to work for a

19. Beevers John, *St Joan of Arc* (A Doubleday Image Book, New York, 1954) p. 103.

20. *Ibid.* 21. *Ibid.*, p. 110. 22. *Ibid.* p. 109

23. Daniel-Rops, *The Protestant Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 310.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 303. 25. *Ibid.*

remedy,<sup>26</sup> thought he ought to obey God rather than men. He demanded the immediate assembly of a general Council to depose the Pope,<sup>27</sup> but it was a cry in the wilderness. He was excommunicated by the Pope and the mob was instigated against him by the threat of an indictment,<sup>28</sup> which had political implications. Savonarola was arrested by the mob with two of his brethren, imprisoned and tortured. On May 23, with two of his companions, he was burnt at the stake in the Florentine Piazza.

It may be true that in his zeal Savonarola had gone to extremes. The fact was that people could not maintain the standard he raised before them. His chastity, asceticism and idealism made him an extreme contrast to the Pope who excommunicated him; many of the saints considered him an authentic witness of the Word; but there were also others who wanted him "to recognize and venerate, in Alexander VI, the Vicar of the Incarnate Word."<sup>29</sup> Here we see indeed a specimen approach of a 'captive theology'. At any rate the days were long past when Paul could fraternally and frankly rebuke Peter'

### **Ignatius of Loyola: the lay preacher**

Five strange people wearing unusual sack-cloth gowns appeared in Alcala in 1526. Soon they became a familiar sight in the streets. Crowds gathered around them, especially around their leader, to listen to his exposition of Christian doctrine. He preached little homilies and served people with his Spiritual Exercises.<sup>30</sup>

These were university students. They were giving instruction and speaking on subjects which came within the scope of ordained priests and trained theologians. Naturally the official machinery of the Church was immediately alerted. The inquisition visited them in November 1526 and subjected them to inquiry; and having "found no fault either in what they taught or in their

26. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 317.                      28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

30. Purcell, Mary, *The First Jesuit*, (A Doubleday Image Book, New York, 1965), p. 167.)

manner of life,"<sup>31</sup> made their dress and shoes the object of inquisition. They were told not to dress alike, and what each should wear was prescribed in detail. Ignatius was forbidden to go about barefoot. Thereafter they were constantly molested by these 'interlopers who stole in to spy upon the liberty Ignatius and his companions enjoyed in the fellowship of Christ Jesus' (Gal. 2:4). Constant visits and interrogations, imprisonment and persecution, did not extinguish the freedom of their spirit. In fact, adverse circumstances only increased their zeal. They never had enough bars or fetters to satisfy their desire for them, out of love for God.<sup>32</sup>

At a time when everything in the Church was officialized and controlled an unauthorized lay preacher like Ignatius was a strange and suspicious sight. But in him the mature freedom of the Christian was alive and active creatively.

### **Teilhard: prophet in exile**

In 1926, Teilhard de Chardin sailed to his exile in China. This great scientist-philosopher-theologian of our century was too disturbing for his contemporaries. His ideas and vision were far ahead of his time. His spirit enjoyed the freedom which truth bestowed, but he met with stiff resistance when he tried to communicate it to others.

In 1924, the General of the Jesuits wrung a promise from Teilhard that he would neither say nor write anything against the traditional position of the Church on the matter of original sin.<sup>33</sup> This was in reaction to a paper written by him which was only an attempt to explain a doctrine which he did not deny. The demand of the General was "too vague and too absolute" for him to abide by. Next he had to sign six propositions drawn up by a body of censors. He did it with reluctance.

The confrontation of his free spirit with the inertness and closed attitudes of the Church was aggravated thereafter. It was

31. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

33. Speaight, Robert, *Teilhard de Chardin, A Biography* (Collins, London, 1967), pp. 136-7.



lifelong and there were moments when he really experienced the anguish and frustration of the prophets. He affirmed his fidelity to the Church and warded off every temptation to break with it.<sup>34</sup> At the same time he had to confess his estrangement from its representatives:

In a kind of way, I *no longer have confidence* in the exterior manifestations of the Church. I believe that through it the divine influence will continue to reach me, but I no longer have much belief in the immediate and tangible value of official directions and decisions. Some people feel happy in the visible Church; but for my own part I think I shall be happy to die in order to be free of it—and to find our Lord outside of it.<sup>35</sup>

His work, *Le Milieu Divin*, in which he tried to systematize his spiritual insights, was held up in Rome. He revised thoroughly the manuscript of this work in the light of the suggestions of his friends, but it happened mysteriously that an unrevised copy of the manuscript was seized by Rome, and subjected to examination. The work was completed in March 1927, and was ready for publication after revision in 1932, but it was published only in 1957 two years after his death, and still it lacked an *imprimatur*.<sup>36</sup> His masterpiece: *Le Phénomène humaine* (The Phenomenon of Man), also met with the same fate. When its publication was forbidden, Teilhard was deeply depressed and did not have the heart to carry on. During that period, "he was at times prostrated by fits of weeping and he appeared to be on the verge of despair,"<sup>37</sup> and when the final verdict came it was "blandly and blankly negative; Teilhard must neither publish nor teach."<sup>38</sup>

On Easter Sunday (April 10, 1955), this prophet of the Future, whose whole life was a pilgrimage to the future possibilities of man, breathed his last. As he himself confessed he had been stifled for fifty years in the subhuman atmosphere of the Church whose capital sin, according to him, was "not to believe in a future."<sup>39</sup> Today he has accepted and recognized at least implicitly by the Church. The Document of Vat. II, *Gaudium et Spes* reflects Teilhard's ideas profusely. The new orientation of

34. *Ibid.*, p. 323.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

spirituality found in this document is basically the spirituality of *Le Milieu Divin* in which Teilhard attempted to reconcile the love of God and the healthy love of the world and to nourish the one by the other. But why is it that, so regularly, the official Church must first distrust, feel threatened, condemn and destroy before opening up humbly to the freedom of the spirit?

### **Theologians and the Church today**

In the past the confrontation of the spirit of freedom and the official Church was present in isolated events, but now after many fetters have been shaken off in Vat. II, it has become widespread. Today we have the sorry situation of theologians at loggerheads with the official Church. Vatican II was the dawn of a new Pentecost, but after that the official Church seems to have fallen back into its condition of captivity and to have revived its inquisitional attitudes.

### **Declaration of freedom**

On December 17, 1968, a declaration of theologians was released with the signatures of 38 of them, all of international fame<sup>40</sup>. It was a declaration for freedom to search after truth, against the oppressive measures of the Roman Curia, especially that of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. It was a protest against the improper way in which theologians like Schillebeeckx were treated for their theological views. Already the controversy over the Dutch Catechism had become notorious.<sup>41</sup>

What is demanded in this declaration is responsible freedom in theological matters: an aspect of the freedom of God's children. The theologians confess that they can go wrong but at the same time assert that a wrong point cannot be settled by force but only through free discussions in the theological world. They point out that the teaching authority of the Church is subject to the Word of God, and draw attention to the fact that theologians are also commissioned to teach and that the Magist-

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40. Now more than 1,000 theologians have signed this document. Cfr. *Herder Correspondence*, Febr. 1969.

41. A detailed presentation of the story of the Dutch Catechism has already appeared in the pages of *Jeevadhara*, No. 9, 1972.

erium should not overlook their mission nor prevent them from fulfilling it.

Their plea to the official Church is that it should not hold them suspect but should respect and recognize them when they speak out or publish their views on matters theological

After asserting their right to freedom in the Church, the theologians put down creative suggestions regarding the updating of the procedures of the Roman Curia. There may arise occasions to initiate inquiries and conduct trials but these should be done fairly in the service of truth in love.

The declaration ends with a confession of obedience to the Church but at the same time a strong request that she should not resort to inquisitorial methods. They may not only be useless today,<sup>42</sup> but would even bring harm on the Church by damaging her credibility among the peoples, much more than in the past.

The reaction of Rome to this declaration could be predicted. It criticized its contents severely<sup>43</sup> and called in question the sincerity of the theologians who were involved in it.

It was proved without delay that Rome did not care much about the collective voice of the theologians. This can be seen from a reply of a theologian to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, in the course of a doctrinal process initiated against him.<sup>44</sup> His complaint is that he cannot recognize the process as "loyal and just and without arbitrariness" and that it is not free from the spirit of the Inquisition. What pains him most is the mystery in which the whole process is shrouded. A secret decree is issued "without the slightest attempt discernible to present it at least to those concerned." Such procedures "which in no way correspond to modern legal consciousness" only serve for the self-destruction of Rome "through imprudence, obduracy, and backwardness."

42. This has been proved in the controversy over the Dutch Catechism.

43. L'Osservatore Romano Jan. 4, 1969.

44. This reply appeared in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Spring 1972.



## Conclusion

This has been a look at the Church from the point of view of freedom of the spirit. It was freedom of the spirit reaching maturity in Jesus and his disciples that caused their complete break with the Jewish set up. Jesus seems at first to have attempted to communicate this freedom of the spirit to the Jews; but he was rebuffed and rejected (Mt. 23:37). The new movement he started was a movement of freedom, freedom from every kind of oppression, with the motto: "Christ set us free, to be free men" (Gal. 5:1). Obeying God rather than men, the apostles preached this truth of the gospel boldly; and in doing so they did not have to consult any human being (Gal. 1:16 NEB), or take anyone's permission.

Freedom of the spirit flourished till the fourth century. Then the Roman empire tactfully led Christianity into captivity and the truth of the gospel began to be compromised. "Yes" and "No" became blended (2 Cor. 1: 9), and in preaching the gospel "human beings" had to be consulted. It was in this climate that traditions and theology grew within Christianity, and naturally in all this a lot of "conferring with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1:16 RSV) crept in. Instead of moving into the future to meet Christ, Christianity began to cling to the past. Her 'traditions' came to be barriers before the pilgrim people, and her thought a justification of the past rather than a search into the future. She presented a God-image shaped in the captivity environment. It does not bear much resemblance with God who is the Future of mankind as he is revealed in the Scriptures. Anybody who comes up with anything new is judged alien and found guilty; the whole system is immediately alerted. From a natural desire, as it were, for survival, the new thought is immediately stifled. Numerous are the sepulchres of those who stood for truth, freedom and creativity. In Vat. II, there was a general awakening, and freedom of the spirit began to appear again; but we are unaccustomed to it and to the problems in which it would involve us. We and the Church therefore tend to slide back into the security of captivity rather than go forward with daring to face the insecurity of freedom. All the same we may be confident that the spirit keeps blowing where he wills and that there is hope yet.



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